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REVISED IN CONFERENCE BY

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PRESIDENT WILLIAM JEWETT TUCKER,
HAMILTON WRIGHT MABIE, HENRY
VAN DYKE, NATHAN HASKELL DOLE

TWENTY VOLUMES *RICHLY ILLUSTRATED*

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FAMOUS POEMS

EDITED BY

THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH

VOLUME XX

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A FOREWORD TO YOUNG READERS

By EDITH M. THOMAS.

From all who live Youth with its dream departs
Save only one, — the Poet, heart of hearts!
Deep in his breast the thoughts of childhood dwell
And make sweet music, like a hidden bell
Within a woodland chapel walled with green,
Where, straight above, all day the stars are seen,
Nor noontide flame betrays the dreaming flowers.

So sacredly, — safe from the thievish Hours,
The poet holds the gift none else may hold,
And still is young, whoever else grows old!
To whom, then, should ye come, O Child, O Youth,
If not to him, your closest kin, in truth?
He will not chide you, nor with smile of scorn
Foretell that every rose will have its thorn;
But, at the thorn-prick, gently will he steal
The pain away. — Ay, best to soothe, to heal,
Because his spirit, too, is delicate,
And feels for yours, — your own true bosom-mate.

No harsh upbraiding to his lip will start;
If he reprove you, 'tis with tenderest Art.
Ofttimes hath he played truant by the way;
The rain and sunshine of the fond spring day,
In many-budding April, well he knows:
How even in idleness the spirit grows,
Himself hath proved. Hence, no stern tutor he.

But when the hour for girded strife must be,
When childhood reaches into youth, at last,
Then lend your ears unto the wakening blast
That cometh from your elder brother's lip,
And trust your footsteps to his leadership,
Nor fear into the fray yourselves to fling,
When, clear aloft, his battle-song shall ring,
For, like the Spartan soldier, he hath made
His prayer unto the Muses for their aid!
There is no bound unto the service wrought
To quick young spirits by the kings of thought.
There was a youthful prince of Macedon
Whose conquering hosts the Orient overrun.
He in a casket of refinèd gold
Bore with him an immortal song of old; —
The son of Philip, and the Muses' son,
An Iliad wrote — a later Iliad won!
And it was "deep-browed Homer," bard and seer,
First woke the soul of Keats to utterance clear.

Much could be told you, of the power of song
To stir to noblest deeds, — to undo wrong —
To win a larger freedom for the mind,
Beck'ning to prospects fair and unconfined.
'Twas the brave music of Euripides
That, chanted by Greek captives overseas,
Brought liberty, and home, and sight of friends:
Such grace the verse of mighty bards attends.

Why speak of deeds heroic — days agone,
When near at hand a lesson may be drawn?
Here is a shy sweet truth 'twere well ye knew;
You the young brother — and young sister, too —
Of poets, are yourselves as poets true;
And his rare visions also visit you.
What though no song you utter to the world;
What though you keep the wings of Fancy furled
Save only in your dreamland Paradise,
Still uninvaded by profaning eyes?
As poets are you all, who yet are young;
For you the gates of morning wide are flung,
And you may see the shining dreams slip back
Along the dewdrop's reascending track.
And you may glimpse the shepherdess of streams
Guiding her flocks beneath the moon's pale gleams;
And you may see the Lady of the Lake
With a white hand the water-lilies wake!
The courier of the wind shall pass your door,

And whisper news from many a wizard shore.
For you the jewels of the snow and frost,
O'ernight from the cold winter heaven lost;
And elfin faces of the dim woodflowers
Shall peep at you from out their tangled bowers.
All flattering invitations come to you,
From spirits of green earth or airy blue,
Docile shall wild things be, and seek to lend
Their key of speech, whereby to make you friend.

While youth you treasure, all this guileless lore
Is yours and the wise poet's precious store.
And, even as he, your hearts serenely trust
That life is good, come all the ills that must;
That, smile for smile, and tear for tear, shall win
A ready way among your human kin;
While he who love and loyal service brings
Has more within his gift than Eastern kings,
And by such giving is ennobled more
Than if the badge of royalty he wore!

What is the secret of the poet's power —
What is the charm of childhood's fleeting hour?
It is to walk a happy stranger still,
And with delight and new-found wonder fill
Each day, while on this wondrous earth we dwell.
Around the child and poet is a spell,
That Beauty greets them whereso'er they turn,

For sight of which the world might well unlearn
Its heavy-hearted wisdom, dearly bought,
And formal precepts Nature never taught.

O earnest child soul, in your faith abide;
No poet's truth has ever been belied,
Though oft have sage and prophet gone astray,
And hastening Time closed up their narrow way;
But oft the poet's passing fancies are
More true than facts by others brought from far,
Since, ever listening, heedful does he bend
His thought to Nature, best and earliest friend.
So, in the faith he teaches ye will bide,
O children, and will save the world, beside,
From laying waste its dearest heritage,
And casting out the poet for the sage!
And when it boasts that dead is all romance,
Unsought as is the tourney's rusting lance,
Lift your young eyes, with quick gainsaying look,
From the live pages of some poet's book
Whose dust in England's Abbey, hidden, lies,
But whose imperial music never dies,
But deepens ever, and in fittest hearts
Each age, and everywhere, an echo starts.

Who says, not here and now, are place and time
For lovely dreams that poets snare in rhyme;
Who says that man's material wants alone

Are now the only need that mortals own?
Who says the child has long outgrown the joy
That once was his in myth and fable coy,—
Forgotten and forgone as last year's toy!

A boy there was,—but yesterday a boy,
In woodcraft skilled; each bird he knew by name,
And each wild trail,—a marksman true of aim.
Upon a day of Spring (Heav'n sent the day!)
He through the greening forest took his way.
And as he passed, a wood-dove met his sight,
Plaining in melancholy dim delight:
The hunter raised his gun; the bead he drew,
When all at once her note a menace grew;
And this he heard, all woodland sounds above,
"*Woe, woe be unto him who kills the dove!*"
He heard, and heeded as though Heaven had sent
A frowning Angel. Home he thoughtful went;
Nor ever sought a bird's life from that hour.
Such still, in youth, is Fancy's living power.

There was a little maid who, chidden, wept;
But, while the tears yet fell, a splendor crept
Beneath the fringes of her brimming eyes;
And, just as when, across gray showery skies,
The bridge of Iris suddenly is thrown,
And all the hosts of rain are onward blown,
So, of those childish tears, by sunshine lit,
A twinkling chain of rainbow gems was knit;

And gone was trouble, like a summer shower!
Such still, in youth, is Fancy's living power,
And life is Poesy, though unaware
Our tender travellers with the Muses' fare.

The world of faery! Long had it been lost
Save that immortal childhood still has crossed
The magic bound, to that fair land forlorn,
Of moonlight morris-dance and echoing horn.
If childhood's wonder-quest had ever ceased,
Who now would know of Beauty and the Beast,
Or her who sleeps a hundred years, to wake,
When comes the Prince, the sleepy spell to break;
Or who could hear the watchword in those chimes
That cheered Young Whittington to aftertimes?
So the deft Fancy lures the child along
With fireside legend and with simplest song,
Until the voices of earth's laureled choir
The spirits keen of youth, rouse and inspire.
I have been young, and I remember still
How some great poet's verse, first heard, can fill
All the hush'd chambers of the eager soul
With melodies that never cease to roll:
Now, listening to each heart-imprisoned strain,
I walk the morning ways of Life again.

O Child, O Youth, a treasure-house behold!
A store more precious than the minted gold

The poets from all times and from all lands
Have given here into your blessèd hands.
Choose as ye will, where all is good, is best
(If all ye choose, that choice, indeed, were best).
And I have hope, as poet-lover true,
That farther yet the search ye will pursue,
Till ye inherit all the treasure vast
That has been left you by the storied past.

Edith M. Thomas

CHEVY-CHASE

(Anonymous, Fifteenth Century.)

GOD prosper long our noble king,
Our lives and safeties all;
A woful hunting once there did
In Chevy-Chase befall.

To drive the deer with hound and horn
Earl Percy took his way;
The child may rue that is unborn
The hunting of that day.

The stout earl of Northumberland
A vow to God did make,
His pleasure in the Scottish woods
Three summer days to take —

The chiefest harts in Chevy-Chase
To kill and bear away.
These tidings to Earl Douglas came,
In Scotland where he lay;

Who sent Earl Percy present word
He would prevent his sport.
The English earl, not fearing that,
Did to the woods resort

With fifteen hundred bowmen bold,
All chosen men of might,
Who knew full well in time of need
To aim their shafts aright.

The gallant greyhounds swiftly ran
To chase the fallow deer;
On Monday they began to hunt
When day-light did appear;

And long before high noon they had
A hundred fat bucks slain;
Then having dined, the drovers went
To rouse the deer again.

The bowmen mustered on the hills,
Well able to endure;
And all their rear, with special care,
That day was guarded sure.

The hounds ran swiftly through the woods,
The nimble deer to take,
That with their cries the hills and dales
An echo shrill did make.

Lord Percy to the quarry went,
To view the slaughtered deer;

Quoth he, "Earl Douglas promised
This day to meet me here;

But if I thought he would not come,
No longer would I stay;"
With that a brave young gentleman
Thus to the earl did say:

"Lo, yonder doth Earl Douglas come,
His men in armor bright;
Full twenty hundred Scottish spears
All marching in our sight;

All men of pleasant Teviotdale,
Fast by the river Tweed;"
"Then cease your sports," Earl Percy said,
"And take your bows with speed;

And now with me, my countrymen,
Your courage forth advance;
For never was there champion yet,
In Scotland or in France,

That ever did on horseback come,
But if my hap it were,
I durst encounter man for man,
With him to break a spear."

Earl Douglas on his milk-white steed,
Most like a baron bold,
Rode foremost of his company,
Whose armor shone like gold.

"Show me," said he, "whose men you be,
That hunt so boldly here,
That, without my consent, do chase
And kill my fallow-deer."

The first man that did answer make,
Was noble Percy he —
Who said, "We list not to declare,
Nor show whose men we be:

Yet will we spend our dearest blood
Thy chiefest harts to slay."
Then Douglas swore a solemn oath,
And thus in rage did say:

"Ere thus I will out-braved be,
One of us two shall die;
I know thee well, an earl thou art
Lord Percy, so am I.

But trust me, Percy, pity it were,
And great offence, to kill
Any of these our guiltless men,
For they have done no ill.

Let you and me the battle try,
And set our men aside."
"Accursed be he," Earl Percy said,
"By whom this is denied."

Then stepped a gallant squire forth,
Witherington was his name,

Who said, "I would not have it told
To Henry, our king, for shame,

That e'er my captain fought on foot,
And I stood looking on.
You be two earls," said Witherington,
"And I a squire alone;

I'll do the best that do I may,
While I have power to stand;
While I have power to wield my sword,
I'll fight with heart and hand."

Our English archers bent their bows —
Their hearts were good and true;
At the first flight of arrows sent,
Full fourscore Scots they slew.

Yet stays Earl Douglas on the bent,
As chieftain stout and good;
As valiant captain, all unmoved,
The shock he firmly stood.

His host he parted had in three,
As leader ware and tried;
And soon his spearmen on their foes
Bore down on every side.

Throughout the English archery
They dealt full many a wound;
But still our valiant Englishmen
All firmly kept their ground.

And throwing straight their bows away
They grasped their swords so bright,
And now sharp blows, a heavy shower
On shields and helmets light.

They closed full fast on every side —
No slackness there was found;
And many a gallant gentleman
Lay gasping on the ground.

In truth, it was a grief to see
How each one chose his spear,
And how the blood out of their breasts
Did gush like water clear.

At last these two stout earls did meet;
Like captains of great might,
Like lions wode, they laid on lode,
And made a cruel fight.

They fought until they both did sweat,
With swords of tempered steel,
Until the blood, like drops of rain,
They trickling down did feel.

"Yield thee, Lord Percy," Douglas said,
"In faith I will thee bring
Where thou shalt high advanced be
By James, our Scottish king.

Thy ransom I will freely give,
And this report of thee,

Thou art the most courageous knight
That ever I did see."

"No, Douglas," saith Earl Percy then,
"Thy proffer I do scorn;
I will not yield to any Scot
That ever yet was born."

With that there came an arrow keen
Out of an English bow,
Which struck Earl Douglas to the heart;
A deep and deadly blow;

Who never spake more words than these:
"Fight on, my merry men all;
For why, my life is at an end;
Lord Percy sees my fall."

Then leaving life, Earl Percy took
The dead man by the hand;
And said, "Earl Douglas, for thy life
Would I had lost my land.

In truth, my very heart doth bleed
With sorrow for thy sake;
For sure a more redoubted knight
Mischance did never take."

A knight amongst the Scots there was
Who saw Earl Douglas die,
Who straight in wrath did vow revenge
Upon the Earl Percy.

Sir Hugh Mountgomery was he called,
Who, with a spear full bright,
Well mounted on a gallant steed,
Ran fiercely through the fight;

And past the English archers all,
Without a dread or fear;
And through Earl Percy's body then
He thrust his hateful spear;

With such vehement force and might
He did his body gore,
The staff ran through the other side
A large cloth-yard and more.

So thus did both these nobles die,
Whose courage none could stain.
An English archer then perceived
The noble earl was slain.

He had a bow bent in his hand,
Made of a trusty tree;
An arrow of a cloth-yard long
To the hard head haled he.

Against Sir Hugh Mountgomery
So right the shaft he set,
The gray goose wing that was thereon
In his heart's blood was wet.

This fight did last from break of day
Till setting of the sun:

For when they rung the evening-bell,
The battle scarce was done.

With stout Earl Percy there were slain
Sir John of Egerton,
Sir Robert Ratcliff, and Sir John,
Sir James, that bold baron.

And with Sir George and stout Sir James,
Both knights of good account,
Good Sir Ralph Raby there was slain,
Whose prowess did surmount.

For Witherington my heart is wo
That ever he slain should be,
For when his legs were hewn in two,
He knelt and fought on his knee.

And with Earl Douglas there was slain
Sir Hugh Mountgomery,
Sir Charles Murray, that from the field
One foot would never flee.

Sir Charles Murray of Ratcliff, too —
His sister's son was he;
Sir David Lamb, so well esteemed,
But saved he could not be.

And the Lord Maxwell in like case
Did with Earl Douglas die:
Of twenty hundred Scottish spears,
Scarce fifty-five did fly.

Of fifteen hundred Englishmen,
Went home but fifty-three;
The rest in Chevy-Chase were slain,
Under the greenwood tree.

Next day did many widows come,
Their husbands to bewail;
They washed their wounds in brinish tears,
But all would not prevail.

Their bodies, bathed in purple blood,
They bore with them away;
They kissed them dead a thousand times,
Ere they were clad in clay.

The news was brought to Edinburgh,
Where Scotland's king did reign,
That brave Earl Douglas suddenly
Was with an arrow slain:

"Oh heavy news," King James did say;
"Scotland can witness be
I have not any captain more
Of such account as he."

Like tidings to King Henry came
Within as short a space,
That Percy of Northumberland
Was slain in Chevy-Chase:

"Now God be with him," said our king,
"Since 'twill no better be;

I trust I have within my realm
Five hundred as good as he:

Yet shall not Scots or Scotland say
But I will vengeance take:
I'll be avenged on them all,
For brave Earl Percy's sake."

This vow full well the king performed
After at Humbledown;
In one day fifty knights were slain
With lords of high renown;

And of the rest, of small account,
Did many hundreds die:
Thus endeth the hunting of Chevy-Chase,
Made by the Earl Percy.

God save the king, and bless this land,
With plenty, joy, and peace;
And grant, henceforth, that foul debate
'Twixt noblemen may cease!

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

(1564–1616.)

SONG.

UNDER the greenwood tree
Who loves to lie with me,
And tune his merry note
Unto the sweet bird's throat,
Come hither, come hither, come hither;
Here shall he see
No enemy
But Winter and rough weather.

Who doth ambition shun
And loves to live i' the sun,
Seeking the food he eats,
And pleased with what he gets,
Come hither, come hither, come hither;
Here shall he see
No enemy
But Winter and rough weather.

"And Tune His Merry Note
Unto the Sweet Bird's Throat."

THE DIRGE OF IMOGEN.

FEAR no more the heat o' the sun,
Nor the furious winter's rages;
Thou thy worldly task hast done,
Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages:
Golden lads and girls all must,
As chimney-sweepers, come to dust.

Fear no more the frown o' the great—
Thou art past the tyrant's stroke;
Care no more to clothe and eat;
To thee the reed is as the oak.
The sceptre, learning, physic, must
All follow this, and come to dust.

Fear no more the lightning-flash,
Nor the all-dreaded thunder-stone;
Fear not slander, censure rash;
Thou hast finished joy and moan:
All lovers young, all lovers must
Consign to thee, and come to dust.

No exorciser harm thee!
Nor no witchcraft charm thee!

Ghost unlaid forbear thee!
Nothing ill come near thee!
Quiet consummation have;
And renowned be thy grave!

WHO IS SYLVIA?

WHO is Sylvia? what is she,
That all the swains commend her?
Holy, fair, and wise, is she;
The heavens such grace did lend her
That she might adored be.

Is she kind, or is she fair?
For beauty lives with kindness.
Love does to her eyes repair
To help him of his blindness —
And, being helped, inhabits there.

Then to Sylvia let us sing
That Sylvia is excelling;
She excels each mortal thing
Upon the dull earth dwelling;
To her let us garlands bring.

ARIEL'S SONGS.

I.

COME unto these yellow sands,
And then take hands;
Court'sied when you have, and kissed,
(The wild waves whist!)
Foot it featly here and there;
And, sweet sprites, the burden bear.
Hark, hark!
Bowgh, wowgh.
The watch-dogs bark—
Bowgh, wowgh.
Hark, hark! I hear
The strain of strutting chanticleer
Cry Cock-a-doodle-doo.

II.

Full fathoms five thy father lies;
Of his bones are coral made;
Those are pearls that were his eyes;
Nothing of him that doth fade
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange.

Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell:
Ding-dong.
Hark! now I hear them — ding, dong, bell!

III.

Where the bee sucks there suck I;
In a cowslip's bell I lie;
There I couch when owls do cry;
On the bat's back I do fly
After summer merrily.
Merrily, merrily, shall I live now,
Under the blossom that hangs on the bough.

ROBERT HERRICK

(1591–1674.)

TO VIOLETS.

WELCOME, maids of honor,
You do bring
In the Spring,
And wait upon her.

She has virgins many,
Fresh and fair;
Yet you are
More sweet than any.

Y' are the Maiden Posies,
And so graced,
To be placed,
'Fore damask roses.

Yet though thus respected,
By and by
Ye do lie,
Poor girls, neglected.

SONG.

GATHER ye rose-buds as ye may,
Old Time is still a-flying;
And this same flower that smiles to-day
To-morrow will be dying.

The glorious lamp of heaven, the sun,
The higher he's a-getting,
The sooner will his race be run,
And nearer he's to setting.

The age is best which is the first,
When youth and blood are warmer;
But being spent, the worse and worst
Time still succeed the former.

Then be not coy, but use your time,
And while ye may, go marry;
For having lost but once your prime,
You may for ever tarry.

JOHN MILTON

(1608–1674.)

AN EPITAPH ON THE ADMIRABLE DRAMATIC POET WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

WHAT needs my Shakespeare for his honored bones —
The labor of an age in piled stones?
Or that his hallowed reliques should be hid
Under a star-y-pointing pyramid?
Dear son of memory, great heir of fame,
What need'st thou such weak witness of thy name?
Thou in our wonder and astonishment
Hast built thyself a live-long monument.
For whilst to the shame of slow-endeavoring art
Thy easy numbers flow, and that each heart
Hath from the leaves of thy unvalued book
Those Delphic lines with deep impression took,
Then thou, our fancy of itself bereaving,
Dost make us marble with too much conceiving;
And, so sepulchred, in such pomp dost lie
That kings for such a tomb would wish to die.

SONG: ON MAY MORNING.

NOW the bright morning star, day's harbinger,
Comes dancing from the east, and leads with her
The flowery May, who from her green lap throws
The yellow cowslip, and the pale primrose.
Hail, bounteous May, that dost inspire
Mirth, and youth, and warm desire;
Woods and groves are of thy dressing,
Hill and dale doth boast thy blessing.
Thus we salute thee with our early song,
And welcome thee, and wish thee long.

ON THE LATE MASSACRE IN PIEMONT.

AVENGE, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints, whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold!
Even them who kept thy truth so pure of old,
When all our fathers worshipped stocks and stones,
Forget not! in thy book record their groans
Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient fold
Slain by the bloody Piemontese, that rolled
Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans
The vales redoubled to the hills, and they
To heaven. Their martyred blood and ashes sow

O'er all th' Italian fields, where still doth sway
The triple tyrant; that from these may grow
A hundred fold, who, having learned thy way,
Early may fly the Babylonian woe.

ON HIS BLINDNESS.

WHEN I consider how my light is spent
Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,
And that one talent which is death to hide
Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent
To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, lest he returning chide —
"Doth God exact day-labor, light denied?"
I fondly ask; but Patience, to prevent
That murmur, soon replies: "God doth not need
Either man's work, or his own gifts; who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best; his state
Is kingly; thousands at his bidding speed,
And post o'er land and ocean without rest;
They also serve who only stand and wait."

RICHARD LOVELACE

(1618–1658.)

TO ALTHEA — FROM PRISON.

WHEN Love, with unconfined wings,
Hovers within my gates,
And my divine Althea brings
To whisper at my grates;
When I lie tangled in her hair
And fettered to her eye —
The birds that wanton in the air
Know no such liberty.

When flowing cups run swiftly round
With no allaying Thames,
Our careless heads with roses bound,
Our hearts with loyal flames;
When thirsty grief in wine we steep,
When healths and draughts go free —
Fishes, that tipple in the deep,
Know no such liberty.

When, like committed linnets I
With shriller throat shall sing
The sweetness, mercy, majesty,
And glories of my king;

When I shall voice aloud how good
He is, how great should be —
Enlarged winds, that curl the flood,
Know no such liberty.

Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage;
Minds innocent and quiet take
That for an hermitage.
If I have freedom in my love,
And in my soul am free —
Angels alone, that soar above,
Enjoy such liberty.

TO LUCASTA.

ON GOING TO THE WARS.

TELL me not, sweet, I am unkinde,
That from the nunnerie
Of thy chaste breast and quiet minde,
To warre and armes I flee.

True, a new mistresse now I chase —
The first foe in the field;
And with a stronger faith imbrace
A sword, a horse, a shield.

Yet this inconstancy is such,
As you, too, should adore;
I could not love thee, deare, so much,
Loved I not honor more.

THOMAS GRAY

(1716–1771.)

ELEGY WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCH-YARD.

THE curfew tolls the knell of parting day;
The lowing herd winds slowly o'er the lea,
The ploughman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds;

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tower,
The moping owl does to the moon complain
Of such as, wand'ring near her secret bower,
Molest her ancient, solitary reign.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
Where heaves the turf in many a mouldering heap,
Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing morn,
The swallow twitt'ring from the straw built shed,
The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,
No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
Or busy housewife ply her evening care;
No children run to lisp their sire's return,
Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield,
Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke;
How jocund did they drive their team a-field!
How bowed the woods beneath their sturdy stroke!

Let not ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
Nor grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
The short and simple annals of the poor.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Await alike th' inevitable hour—
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Nor you, ye proud, impute to these the fault,
If memory o'er their tomb no trophies raise,
Where through the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault
The pealing anthem swells the note of praise.

Can storied urn, or animated bust,
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?
Can honor's voice provoke the silent dust,
Or flattery soothe the dull cold ear of death?

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire —
Hands, that the rod of empire might have swayed,
Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre;

But knowledge to their eyes her ample page,
Rich with the spoils of time, did ne'er unroll;
Chill penury repressed their noble rage,
And froze the genial current of the soul.

Full many a gem of purest ray serene
The dark, unfathomed caves of ocean bear;
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Some village Hampden, that, with dauntless breast,
The little tyrant of his fields withstood —
Some mute, inglorious Milton here may rest,
Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood.

Th' applause of listening senates to command,
The threats of pain and ruin to despise,
To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
And read their history in a nation's eyes

Their lot forbade; nor circumscribed alone,
Their growing virtues, but their crimes confined —
Forbade to wade through slaughter to a throne,
And shut the gates of mercy on mankind;

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,
To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame,
Or heap the shrine of luxury and pride
With incense kindled at the muse's flame.

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,
Their sober wishes never learned to stray;
Along the cool, sequestered vale of life
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.

Yet even these bones from insult to protect,
Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture decked,
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.

Their name, their years, spelt by th' unlettered muse,
The place of fame and elegy supply;
And many a holy text around she strews,
That teach the rustic moralist to die.

For who, to dumb forgetfulness a prey,
This pleasing, anxious being e'er resigned,
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
Nor cast one longing, lingering look behind?

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
Some pious drops the closing eye requires;
E'en from the tomb the voice of nature cries,
E'en in our ashes live their wonted fires.

For thee, who, mindful of th' unhonored dead,
Dost in these lines their artless tale relate;
If chance, by lonely contemplation led,
Some kindred spirit shall inquire thy fate —

Haply some hoary-headed swain may say:
"Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn
Brushing with hasty steps the dews away,
To meet the sun upon the upland lawn.

There at the foot of yonder nodding beech,
That wreathes its old, fantastic roots so high,
His listless length at noontide would he stretch,
And pore upon the brook that babbles by.

Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,
Muttering his wayward fancies he would rove —
Now drooping, woeful-wan, like one forlorn,
Or crazed with care, or crossed in hopeless love.

One morn I missed him on the 'customed hill,
Along the heath, and near his favorite tree;
Another came — nor yet beside the rill,
Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he;

The next, with dirges due in sad array,
Slow through the church-way path we saw him borne: —
Approach and read (for thou can'st read) the lay
Graved on the stone beneath yon aged thorn."

THE EPITAPH.

Here rests his head upon the lap of earth
A youth to fortune and to fame unknown;
Fair Science frowned not on his humble birth,
And Melancholy marked him for her own.

Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere —
Heaven did a recompense as largely send;
He gave to misery (all he had) a tear,
He gained from heaven ('twas all he wished) a friend.

No farther seek his merits to disclose,
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode —
(There they alike in trembling hope repose),
The bosom of his Father and his God.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

(1728–1774.)

THE DESERTED VILLAGE.

SWEET Auburn! loveliest village of the plain,
Where health and plenty cheered the laboring swain,
Where smiling spring its earliest visit paid,
And parting summer's lingering blooms delayed!
Dear lovely bowers of innocence and ease —
Seats of my youth, when every sport could please!
How often have I loitered o'er thy green,
Where humble happiness endeared each scene!
How often have I paused on every charm —
The sheltered cot, the cultivated farm,
The never-failing brook, the busy mill,
The decent church that topt the neighboring hill,
The hawthorn bush, with seats beneath the shade —
For talking age and whispering lovers made!
How often have I blest the coming day,
When toil, remitting, lent its turn to play,

And all the village train, from labor free,
Led up their sports beneath the spreading tree;
While many a pastime circled in the shade,
The young contending as the old surveyed;
And many a gambol frolicked o'er the ground,
And sleights of art and feats of strength went round;
And still as each repeated pleasure tired,
Succeeding sports the mirthful band inspired:
The dancing pair, that simply sought renown
By holding out, to tire each other down;
The swain mistrustless of his smutted face,
While secret laughter tittered round the place;
The bashful virgin's sidelong looks of love,
The matron's glance that would those looks reprove:
These were thy charms, sweet village! sports like these,
With sweet succession, taught e'en toil to please;
These round thy bowers their cheerful influence shed;
These were thy charms — but all these charms are fled.

Sweet smiling village, loveliest of the lawn!
Thy sports are fled, and all thy charms withdrawn;
Amidst thy bowers the tyrant's hand is seen,
And desolation saddens all thy green;
One only master grasps the whole domain,
And half a tillage stints thy smiling plain;
No more thy glassy brook reflects the day,
But, choked with sedges, works its weedy way;
Along thy glades, a solitary guest,
The hollow-sounding bittern guards its nest;
Amidst thy desert walks the lapwing flies,
And tires their echoes with unvaried cries;

Sunk are thy bowers in shapeless ruin all,
And the long grass o'ertops the mouldering wall;
And, trembling, shrinking from the spoiler's hand,
Far, far away thy children leave the land.

Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay;
Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade —
A breath can make them, as a breath has made;
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
When once destroyed, can never be supplied.

A time there was, ere England's griefs began,
When every rood of ground maintained its man:
For him light labor spread her wholesome store —
Just gave what life required, but gave no more;
His best companions, innocence and health;
And his best riches, ignorance of wealth.

But times are altered: trade's unfeeling train
Usurp the land, and dispossess the swain;
Along the lawn, where scattered hamlets rose,
Unwieldy wealth and cumbrous pomp repose;
And every want to luxury allied,
And every pang that folly pays to pride.
Those gentle hours that plenty bade to bloom,
Those calm desires that asked but little room,
Those healthful sports that graced the peaceful scene,
Lived in each look, and brightened all the green —
These, far departing, seek a kinder shore,
And rural mirth and manners are no more.

Sweet Auburn! parent of the blissful hour,
Thy glades forlorn confess the tyrant's power.
Here, as I take my solitary rounds
Amidst thy tangling walks and ruined grounds,
And, many a year elapsed, return to view
Where once the cottage stood, the hawthorn grew,
Remembrance wakes with all her busy train,
Swells at my breast, and turns the past to pain.

In all my wanderings round this world of care,
In all my griefs — and God has given my share —
I still had hopes my latest hours to crown,
Amidst these humble bowers to lay me down;
To husband out life's taper at the close,
And keep the flame from wasting by repose;
I still had hopes —for pride attends us still —
Amidst the swains to show my book-learned skill,
Around my fire an evening group to draw,
And tell of all I felt, and all I saw;
And, as a hare, whom hounds and horns pursue,
Pants to the place from whence at first she flew,
I still had hopes, my long vexations past,
Here to return — and die at home at last.

O blest retirement! friend to life's decline!
Retreats from care, that never must be mine!
How blest is he who crowns, in shades like these,
A youth of labor with an age of ease;
Who quits a world where strong temptations try,
And, since 'tis hard to combat, learns to fly!
For him no wretches, born to work and weep,
Explore the mine, or tempt the dangerous deep;

No surly porter stands in guilty state,
To spurn imploring famine from the gate;
But on he moves to meet his latter end,
Angels around befriending virtue's friend;
Sinks to the grave with unperceived decay,
While resignation gently slopes the way;
And, all his prospects brightening to the last,
His heaven commences ere the world be past.

Sweet was the sound, when oft at evening's close
Up yonder hill the village murmur rose;
There, as I passed with careless steps and slow,
The mingling notes came softened from below:
The swain responsive as the milkmaid sung,
The sober herd that lowed to meet their young,
The noisy geese that gabbled o'er the pool,
The playful children just let loose from school,
The watch-dog's voice that bayed the whispering wind,
And the loud laugh that spoke the vacant mind.
These all in sweet confusion sought the shade,
And filled each pause the nightingale had made.
But now the sounds of population fail;
No cheerful murmurs fluctuate in the gale;
No busy steps the grass-grown footway tread —
For all the blooming flush of life is fled.
All but yon widowed, solitary thing,
That feebly bends beside the plashy spring;
She, wretched matron, forced in age, for bread,
To strip the brook with mantling cresses spread,
To pick her wintry fagot from the thorn,
To seek her nightly shed, and weep till morn;

She only left of all the harmless train,
The sad historian of the pensive plain.

Near yonder copse, where once the garden smiled,
And still where many a garden-flower grows wild,
There, where a few torn shrubs the place disclose,
The village preacher's modest mansion rose.
A man he was to all the country dear,
And passing rich with forty pounds a year;
Remote from towns he ran his golden race,
Nor e'er had changed, nor wished to change, his place;
Unskilful he to fawn, or seek for power
By doctrines fashioned to the varying hour;
Far other aims his heart had learned to prize —
More skilled to raise the wretched than to rise.
His house was known to all the vagrant train;
He chid their wanderings, but relieved their pain.
The long-remembered beggar was his guest,
Whose beard, descending, swept his aged breast;
The ruined spendthrift, now no longer proud,
Claimed kindred there, and had his claim allowed;
The broken soldier, kindly bade to stay,
Sate by his fire, and talked the night away —
Wept o'er his wounds, or, tales of sorrow done,
Shouldered his crutch, and showed how fields were won.
Pleased with his guests, the good man learned to glow,
And quite forgot their vices in their woe;
Careless their merits or their faults to scan,
His pity gave ere charity began.

Thus to relieve the wretched was his pride,
And e'en his failings leaned to virtue's side;

But in his duty prompt at every call,
He watched and wept, he prayed and felt for all;
And, as a bird each fond endearment tries
To tempt its new-fledged offspring to the skies,
He tried each art, reproved each dull delay,
Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way.

Beside the bed where parting life was laid,
And sorrow, guilt, and pain, by turns dismayed,
The reverend champion stood. At his control
Despair and anguish fled the struggling soul;
Comfort came down the trembling wretch to raise,
And his last faltering accents whispered praise.

At church, with meek and unaffected grace,
His looks adorned the venerable place;
Truth from his lips prevailed with double sway,
And fools, who came to scoff, remained to pray.
The service past, around the pious man,
With ready zeal, each honest rustic ran;
E'en children followed, with endearing wile,
And plucked his gown, to share the good man's smile.
His ready smile a parent's warmth exprest;
Their welfare pleased him, and their cares distressed;
To them his heart, his love, his griefs, were given —
But all his serious thoughts had rest in heaven.
As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,
Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm,
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head.

Beside yon straggling fence that skirts the way,
With blossomed furze unprofitably gay

There, in his noisy mansion, skilled to rule,
The village master taught his little school.
A man severe he was, and stern to view —
I knew him well, and every truant knew;
Well had the boding tremblers learned to trace
The day's disasters in his morning face;
Full well they laughed, with counterfeited glee,
At all his jokes, for many a joke had he;
Full well the busy whisper, circling round,
Conveyed the dismal tidings when he frowned;
Yet he was kind — or, if severe in aught,
The love he bore to learning was in fault.
The village all declared how much he knew;
'Twas certain he could write, and cipher too;
Lands he could measure, terms and tides presage,
And e'en the story ran that he could gauge.
In arguing, too, the parson owned his skill,
For, e'en though vanquished, he could argue still;
While words of learned length and thundering sound
Amazed the gazing rustics ranged around;
And still they gazed, and still the wonder grew,
That one small head could carry all he knew.
But past is all his fame; the very spot,
Where many a time he triumphed, is forgot.

Near yonder thorn, that lifts its head on high,
Where once the sign-post caught the passing eye,
Low lies that house where nut-brown draughts inspired,
Where gray-beard mirth and smiling toil retired,
Where village statesmen talked with looks profound,
And news much older than their ale went round.

Imagination fondly stoops to trace
The parlor splendors of that festive place:
The whitewashed wall, the nicely sanded floor,
The varnished clock that clicked behind the door,
The chest contrived a double debt to pay —
A bed by night, a chest of drawers by day,
The pictures placed for ornament and use,
The twelve good rules, the royal game of goose;
The hearth, except when winter chilled the day,
With aspen boughs, and flowers and fennel gay;
While broken tea-cups, wisely kept for show,
Ranged o'er the chimney, glistened in a row.

Vain, transitory splendors! could not all
Reprieve the tottering mansion from its fall?
Obscure it sinks, nor shall it more impart
An hour's importance to the poor man's heart;
Thither no more the peasant shall repair
To sweet oblivion of his daily care;
No more the farmer's news, the barber's tale,
No more the woodman's ballad shall prevail;
No more the smith his dusky brow shall clear,
Relax his ponderous strength, and lean to hear;
The host himself no longer shall be found
Careful to see the mantling bliss go round;
Nor the coy maid, half willing to be prest,
Shall kiss the cup to pass it to the rest.

Yes! let the rich deride, the proud disdain,
These simple blessings of the lowly train;
To me more dear, congenial to my heart,
One native charm than all the gloss of art;

Spontaneous joys, where nature has its play,
The soul adopts, and owns their first-born sway;
Lightly they frolic o'er the vacant mind,
Unenvied, unmolested, unconfined;
But the long pomp, the midnight masquerade,
With all the freaks of wanton wealth arrayed —
In these, ere triflers half their wish obtain,
The toiling pleasure sickens into pain;
And, e'en while fashion's brightest arts decoy,
The heart, distrusting, asks if this be joy.

Ye friends to truth, ye statesmen, who survey
The rich man's joys increase, the poor's decay!
'Tis yours to judge how wide the limits stand
Between a splendid and a happy land.
Proud swells the tide with loads of freighted ore,
And shouting folly hails them from her shore;
Hoards, e'en beyond the miser's wish, abound,
And rich men flock from all the world around.
Yet count our gains: this wealth is but a name,
That leaves our useful products still the same.
Not so the loss: the man of wealth and pride
Takes up a space that many poor supplied —
Space for his lake, his park's extended bounds —
Space for his horses, equipage, and hounds;
The robe that wraps his limbs in silken sloth
Has robbed the neighboring fields of half their growth;
His seat, where solitary sports are seen,
Indignant spurns the cottage from the green;
Around the world each needful product flies,
For all the luxuries the world supplies;

"Where Village Statesmen Talked with Looks Profound,
And News Much Older Than Their Ale Went Round."

While thus the land, adorned for pleasure all,
In barren splendor, feebly waits the fall.

As some fair female, unadorned and plain,
Secure to please while youth confirms her reign,
Slights every borrowed charm that dress supplies,
Nor shares with art the triumph of her eyes;
But when those charms are past — for charms are frail —
When time advances, and when lovers fail,
She then shines forth, solicitous to bless,
In all the glaring impotence of dress:
Thus fares the land, by luxury betrayed,
In nature's simplest charms at first arrayed;
But, verging to decline, its splendors rise,
Its vistas strike, its palaces surprise;
While, scourged by famine, from the smiling land
The mournful peasant leads his humble band;
And while he sinks, without one arm to save,
The country blooms — a garden and a grave.

Where then, ah! where, shall poverty reside,
To 'scape the pressure of contiguous pride?
If, to some common's fenceless limits strayed,
He drives his flock to pick the scanty blade,
Those fenceless fields the sons of wealth divide,
And even the bare-worn common is denied.

If to the city sped, what waits him there?
To see profusion that he must not share;
To see ten thousand baneful arts combined
To pamper luxury, and thin mankind;
To see each joy the sons of pleasure know

Extorted from his fellow-creatures' woe.
Here while the courtier glitters in brocade,
There the pale artist plies the sickly trade;
Here while the proud their long-drawn pomps display,
There the black gibbet glooms beside the way;
The dome where pleasure holds her midnight reign,
Here, richly decked, admits the gorgeous train;
Tumultuous grandeur crowds the blazing square —
The rattling chariots clash, the torches glare.
Sure scenes like these no troubles e'er annoy!
Sure these denote one universal joy!
Are these thy serious thoughts? Ah! turn thine eyes
Where the poor, houseless, shivering female lies:
She once, perhaps, in village plenty blest,
Has wept at tales of innocence distrest;
Her modest looks the cottage might adorn,
Sweet as the primrose peeps beneath the thorn;
Now lost to all — her friends, her virtue fled —
Near her betrayer's door she lays her head;
And, pinched with cold, and shrinking from the shower,
With heavy heart deplores that luckless hour
When, idly first, ambitious of the town,
She left her wheel, and robes of country brown.

Do thine, sweet Auburn — thine the loveliest train —
Do thy fair tribes participate her pain?
E'en now, perhaps, by cold and hunger led,
At proud men's doors they ask a little bread.

Ah, no! To distant climes, a dreary scene,
Where half the convex world intrudes between,

Through torrid tracts with fainting steps they go,
Where wild Altama murmurs to their woe.
Far different there, from all that charmed before,
The various terrors of that horrid shore:
Those blazing suns that dart a downward ray,
And fiercely shed intolerable day;
Those matted woods where birds forget to sing,
But silent bats in drowsy clusters cling;
Those pois'nous fields, with rank luxuriance crowned,
Where the dark scorpion gathers death around;
Where at each step the stranger fears to wake
The rattling terrors of the vengeful snake;
Where crouching tigers wait their hapless prey,
And savage men more murderous still than they;
While oft in whirls the mad tornado flies,
Mingling the ravaged landscape with the skies.
Far different these from every former scene —
The cooling brook, the grassy-vested green,
The breezy covert of the warbling grove,
That only sheltered thefts of harmless love.

Good heaven! what sorrows gloomed that parting day
That called them from their native walks away;
When the poor exiles, every pleasure past,
Hung round the bowers, and fondly looked their last,
And took a long farewell, and wished in vain,
For seats like these beyond the western main;
And, shuddering still to face the distant deep,
Returned and wept, and still returned to weep!
The good old sire the first prepared to go
To new-found worlds, and wept for others' woe;

But for himself, in conscious virtue brave,
He only wished for worlds beyond the grave.
His lovely daughter, lovelier in her tears,
The fond companion of his helpless years,
Silent went next, neglectful of her charms,
And left a lover's for a father's arms.
With louder plaints the mother spoke her woes,
And blessed the cot where every pleasure rose;
And kissed her thoughtless babes with many a tear,
And clasped them close, in sorrow doubly dear;
Whilst her fond husband strove to lend relief
In all the silent manliness of grief.

O luxury! thou curst by heaven's decree,
How ill exchanged are things like these for thee!
How do thy potions, with insidious joy,
Diffuse their pleasures only to destroy!
Kingdoms by thee, to sickly greatness grown,
Boast of a florid vigor not their own.
At every draught more large and large they grow,
A bloated mass of rank unwieldy woe;
Till sapped their strength, and every part unsound,
Down, down they sink, and spread a ruin round.

Even now the devastation is begun,
And half the business of destruction done;
Even now, methinks, as pondering here I stand,
I see the rural virtues leave the land.
Down where yon anchoring vessel spreads the sail
That, idly waiting, flaps with every gale —
Downward they move, a melancholy band,
Pass from the shore, and darken all the strand.

Contented toil, and hospitable care,
And kind connubial tenderness are there;
And piety with wishes placed above,
And steady loyalty, and faithful love.

And thou, sweet poetry, thou loveliest maid,
Still first to fly where sensual joys invade —
Unfit, in these degenerate times of shame,
To catch the heart, or strike for honest fame!
Dear, charming nymph, neglected and decried,
My shame in crowds, my solitary pride!
Thou source of all my bliss and all my woe —
That found'st me poor at first, and keep'st me so!
Thou guide by which the nobler arts excel!
Thou nurse of every virtue — fare thee well!
Farewell! — and oh! where'er thy voice be tried,
On Torno's cliffs, or Pambamarca's side —
Whether where equinoctial fervors glow,
Or winter wraps the polar world in snow —
Still let thy voice, prevailing over time,
Redress the rigors of th' inclement clime;
Aid slighted truth with thy persuasive strain;
Teach erring man to spurn the rage of gain;
Teach him that states, of native strength possest,
Though very poor, may still be very blest;
That trade's proud empire hastes to swift decay,
As ocean sweeps the labored mole away;
While self-dependent power can time defy,
As rocks resist the billows and the sky.

WILLIAM BLAKE

(1757–1827.)

THE TIGER.

TIGER! Tiger! burning bright,
In the forest of the night;
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

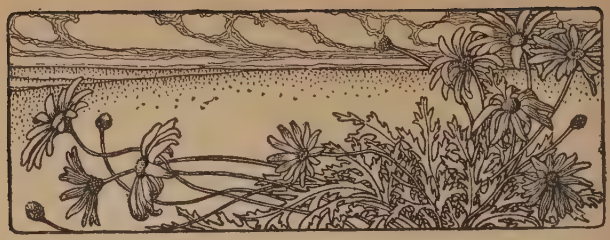
In what distant deeps or skies
Burned the ardor of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire
What the hand dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, and what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand forged thy dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain?
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil! What dread grasp
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears,
And watered heaven with their tears,
Did he smile his work to see?
Did He who made the lamb make thee?

Tiger! Tiger! burning bright,
In the forest of the night;
What immortal hand or eye
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?



ROBERT BURNS

(1759–1796.)

TO A MOUNTAIN DAISY.

ON TURNING ONE DOWN WITH THE PLOUGH IN APRIL 1786.

WEE, modest, crimson-tipped flower,
Thou's met me in an evil hour;
For I maun crush amang the stoure
Thy slender stem:
To spare thee now is past my power,
Thou bonnie gem.

Alas! it's no thy neebor sweet,
The bonnie lark, companion meet,
Bending thee 'mang the dewy weet
Wi' speckled breast,
When upward-springing, blithe to greet
The purpling east.

Cauld blew the bitter-biting north
Upon thy early, humble birth;
Yet cheerfully thou glinted forth
Amid the storm —
Scarce reared above the parent earth
Thy tender form.

The flaunting flowers our gardens yield,
High shelt'ring woods and wa's maun shield;
But thou, beneath the random bield
O' clod or stane,
Adorns the histie stibble-field
Unseen, alane.

There, in thy scanty mantle clad,
Thy snawie bosom sunward spread,
Thou lifts thy unassuming head
In humble guise;
But now the share uptears thy bed,
And low thou lies!

Such is the fate of artless maid,
Sweet flowret of the rural shade!
By love's simplicity betrayed,
And guileless trust,
Till she, like thee, all soiled, is laid
Low i' the dust.

Such is the fate of simple bard,
On life's rough ocean luckless starred;
Unskilful he to note the card
Of prudent lore,
Till billows rage, and gales blow hard,
And whelm him o'er!

Such fate to suffering worth is given,
Who long with wants and woes has striven,

By human pride or cunning driven
To misery's brink,
Till, wrenched of every stay but Heaven,
He, ruined, sink!

Even thou who mourn'st the Daisy's fate,
That fate is thine — no distant date;
Stern ruin's ploughshare drives elate,
Full on thy bloom,
Till crushed beneath the furrow's weight,
Shall be thy doom!

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

(1770—1850.)

DAFFODILS.

I WANDERED, lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd —
A host of golden daffodils
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of the bay:
Ten thousand saw I, at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced, but they
Outdid the sparkling waves in glee;
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company;
I gazed — and gazed — but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie,
In vacant or in pensive mood,
The flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude,
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH WITH US.

THE world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;
It moves us not — Great God! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

WE ARE SEVEN.

A SIMPLE child,
That lightly draws its breath,
And feels its life in every limb,
What should it know of death?

I met a little cottage girl:
She was eight years old, she said,
Her hair was thick with many a curl
That clustered round her head.

She had a rustic, woodland air,
And she was wildly clad;
Her eyes were fair, and very fair;—
Her beauty made me glad.

"Sisters and brothers, little maid,
How many may you be?"
"How many? Seven in all," she said,
And wondering looked at me.

"And where are they? I pray you tell."
She answered: "Seven are we;
And two of us at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea.

Two of us in the churchyard lie,
My sister and my brother;
And, in the churchyard cottage, I
Dwell near them with my mother."

"You say that two at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea,
Yet ye are seven! I pray you tell,
Sweet maid, how this may be."

Then did the little maid reply:
"Seven boys and girls are we;
Two of us in the churchyard lie,
Beneath the churchyard tree."

"You run about, my little maid;
Your limbs they are alive;
If two are in the churchyard laid,
Then ye are only five."

"Their graves are green, they may be seen,"
The little maid replied:
"Twelve steps or more from my mother's door,
And they are side by side.

My stockings there I often knit,
My kerchief there I hem;
And there upon the ground I sit,
And sing a song to them.

And often after sunset, sir,
When it is light and fair,
I take my little porringer,
And eat my supper there.

The first that died was sister Jane;
In bed she moaning lay,
Till God released her of her pain;
And then she went away.

So in the churchyard she was laid;
And, when the grass was dry,
Together round her grave we played,
My brother John and I.

And when the ground was white with snow,
And I could run and slide,
My brother John was forced to go,
And he lies by her side."

"How many are you, then," said I,
"If they two are in heaven?"
Quick was the little maid's reply:
"O Master! we are seven."

"But they are dead; those two are dead!
Their spirits are in heaven!" —
'Twas throwing words away; for still
The little maid would have her will,
And said: "Nay, we are seven!"

"It is an Ancient Mariner, and He Stoppeth One of Three."

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

(1772–1834.)

RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER.

IN SEVEN PARTS.

PART I.

IT is an ancient mariner,
And he stoppeth one of three:
"By thy long gray beard and glittering eye,
Now wherefore stopp'st thou me?

The bridegroom's doors are opened wide,
And I am next of kin;
The guests are met, the feast is set—
May'st hear the merry din."

He holds him with his skinny hand:
"There was a ship," quoth he.
"Hold off! unhand me, gray-beard loon!"—
Eftsoons his hand dropt he.

He holds him with his glittering eye—
The wedding-guest stood still;

He listens like a three years' child:
The mariner hath his will.

The wedding-guest sat on a stone —
He cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed mariner.

"The ship was cheered, the harbor cleared;
Merrily did we drop
Below the kirk, below the hill,
Below the light-house top.

The sun came up upon the left,
Out of the sea came he;
And he shone bright, and on the right
Went down into the sea;

Higher and higher every day,
Till over the mast at noon —"
The wedding-guest here beat his breast,
For he heard the loud bassoon.

The bride hath paced into the hall —
Red as a rose is she;
Nodding their heads before her goes
The merry minstrelsy.

The wedding-guest he beat his breast,
Yet he cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed mariner:

"And now the storm-blast came, and he
Was tyrannous and strong;

He struck with his o'ertaking wings,
And chased us south along.

With sloping masts and dipping prow —
As who pursued with yell and blow
Still treads the shadow of his foe,
And forward bends his head —
The ship drove fast; loud roared the blast,
And southward aye we fled.

And now there came both mist and snow,
And it grew wondrous cold;
And ice, mast-high, came floating by,
As green as emerald.

And through the drifts the snowy cliffs
Did send a dismal sheen;
Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken —
The ice was all between.

The ice was here, the ice was there,
The ice was all around;
It cracked and growled, and roared and howled,
Like noises in a swound!

At length did cross an albatross —
Thorough the fog it came;
As if it had been a Christian soul,
We hailed it in God's name.

It ate the food it ne'er had eat,
And round and round it flew.
The ice did split with a thunder-fit;
The helmsman steered us through!

And a good south wind sprang up behind;
The albatross did follow,
And every day, for food or play,
Came to the mariner's hollo!

In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud,
It perched for vespers nine;
Whiles all the night, through fog-smoke white,
Glimmered the white moon-shine."

"God save thee, ancient mariner!
From the fiends that plague thee thus!"
Why look'st thou so?" — "With my cross-bow
I shot the albatross."

"Then all Averred, I Had Killed the Bird
That Brought the Fog and Mist."

PART II.

"The sun now rose upon the right —
Out of the sea came he,
Still hid in mist, and on the left
Went down into the sea.

And the good south wind still blew behind;
But no sweet bird did follow,
Nor any day for food or play
Came to the mariners' hollo.

And I had done a hellish thing,
And it would work 'em woe;
For all averred I had killed the bird
That made the breeze to blow:
Ah wretch! said they, the bird to slay,
That made the breeze to blow!

Nor dim nor red, like God's own head
The glorious sun uprist;
Then all averrred I had killed the bird
That brought the fog and mist:
'Twas right, said they, such birds to slay,
That bring the fog and mist.

The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow followed free;
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea.

Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down —
'Twas sad as sad could be;
And we did speak only to break
The silence of the sea.

All in a hot and copper sky
The bloody sun, at noon,
Right up above the mast did stand,
No bigger than the moon.

Day after day, day after day,
We stuck — nor breath nor motion;
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.

Water, water everywhere,
And all the boards did shrink;
Water, water everywhere,
Nor any drop to drink.

The very deep did rot; O Christ!
That ever this should be!
Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs
Upon the slimy sea!

About, about, in reel and rout,
The death-fires danced at night;
The water like a witch's oils,
Burnt green, and blue, and white.

And some in dreams assured were
Of the spirit that plagued us so;
Nine fathom deep he had followed us
From the land of mist and snow.

And every tongue, through utter drought,
Was withered at the root;
We could not speak, no more than if
We had been choked with soot.

Ah! well a-day! what evil looks
Had I from old and young!
Instead of the cross the albatross
About my neck was hung.

"With Throats Unslaked, with Black Lips Baked,
We could nor Laugh nor Wail."

PART III.

There passed a weary time. Each throat
Was parched, and glazed each eye —
A weary time! a weary time!
How glazed each weary eye! —
When, looking westward, I beheld
A something in the sky.

At first it seemed a little speck,
And then it seemed a mist;
It moved and moved, and took at last
A certain shape, I wist —

A speck, a mist, a shape, I wist!
And still it neared and neared;
As if it dodged a water-sprite,
It plunged and tacked and veered.

With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
We could nor laugh nor wail;
Through utter drought all dumb we stood!
I bit my arm, I sucked the blood,
And cried, A sail! a sail!

With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
Agape they heard me call;
Gramercy! they for joy did grin,
And all at once their breath drew in,
As they were drinking all.

See! see! I cried, she tacks no more!
Hither to work us weal —
Without a breeze, without a tide,
She steadies with upright keel!

The western wave was all a-flame;
The day was well nigh done;
Almost upon the western wave
Rested the broad bright sun,
When that strange shape drove suddenly
Betwixt us and the sun.

And straight the sun was flecked with bars,
(Heaven's mother send us grace!)
As if through a dungeon-grate he peered
With broad and burning face.

Alas! thought I — and my heart beat loud —
How fast she nears and nears!
Are those her sails that glance in the sun,
Like restless gossameres?

Are those her ribs through which the sun
Did peer, as through a grate?
And is that woman all her crew?
Is that a death? and are there two?
Is death that woman's mate?

Her lips were red, her looks were free,
Her locks were yellow as gold;
Her skin was as white as leprosy:
The night-mare, Life-in-Death, was she,
Who thicks man's blood with cold.

The naked hulk alongside came,
And the twain were casting dice:
'The game is done! I've won! I've won!'
Quoth she, and whistles thrice.

The sun's rim dips, the stars rush out,
At one stride comes the dark;
With far-heard whisper, o'er the sea,
Off shot the spectre bark.

We listened, and looked sideways up;
Fear at my heart, as at a cup,
My life-blood seemed to sip;
The stars were dim, and thick the night—
The steersman's face by his lamp gleamed white;
From the sails the dew did drip—
Till clomb above the eastern bar
The horned moon, with one bright star
Within the nether tip.

One after one, by the star-dogged moon,
Too quick for groan or sigh,

Each turned his face with a ghastly pang,
And cursed me with his eye.

Four times fifty living men,
(And I heard nor sigh nor groan!)
With heavy thump, a lifeless lump,
They dropped down one by one.

The souls did from their bodies fly,—
They fled to bliss or woe!
And every soul it passed me by,
Like the whizz of my cross-bow!"

"The Albatross Fell off and Sank
Like Lead into the Sea."

PART IV.

"I fear thee, ancient mariner!
I fear thy skinny hand!
And thou art long, and lank, and brown,
As is the ribbed sea-sand.

I fear thee and thy glittering eye,
And thy skinny hand so brown." —
"Fear not, fear not, thou wedding-guest!
This body dropt not down.

Alone, alone, all, all alone,
Alone on a wide, wide sea!
And never a saint took pity on
My soul in agony.

The many men, so beautiful!
And they all dead did lie;
And a thousand thousand slimy things
Lived on — and so did I.

I looked upon the rotting sea,
And drew my eyes away;
I looked upon the rotting deck,
And there the dead men lay.

I looked to heaven, and tried to pray;
But or ever a prayer had gusht
A wicked whisper came, and made
My heart as dry as dust.

I closed my lids, and kept them close,
And the balls like pulses beat;
For the sky and the sea and the sea and the sky
Lay like a load on my weary eye,
And the dead were at my feet.

The cold sweat melted from their limbs —
Nor rot nor reek did they;

The look with which they looked on me
Had never passed away.

An orphan's curse would drag to hell
A spirit from on high;
But oh! more horrible than that
Is the curse in a dead man's eye!
Seven days, seven nights, I saw that curse —
And yet I could not die.

The moving moon went up the sky,
And nowhere did abide;
Softly she was going up,
And a star or two beside —

Her beams bemocked the sultry main,
Like April hoar-frost spread;
But where the ship's huge shadow lay
The charmed water burnt alway,
A still and awful red.

Beyond the shadow of the ship
I watched the water-snakes;
They moved in tracks of shining white;
And when they reared, the elfish light
Fell off in hoary flakes.

Within the shadow of the ship
I watched their rich attire —
Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,
They coiled and swam; and every track
Was a flash of golden fire.

O happy living things! no tongue
Their beauty might declare;
A spring of love gushed from my heart,
And I blessed them unaware —
Sure my kind saint took pity on me,
And I blessed them unaware.

The selfsame moment I could pray;
And from my neck so free
The albatross fell off, and sank
Like lead into the sea.

"Oh Sleep! It is a Gentle Thing, Beloved from Pole to Pole."

PART V.

Oh sleep! it is a gentle thing,
Beloved from pole to pole!
To Mary Queen the praise be given!
She sent the gentle sleep from heaven
That slid into my soul.

The silly buckets on the deck,
That had so long remained,
I dreamt that they were filled with dew;
And when I awoke, it rained.

My lips were wet, my throat was cold,
My garments all were dank;
Sure I had drunken in my dreams,
And still my body drank.

I moved, and could not feel my limbs;
I was so light — almost
I thought that I had died in sleep,
And was a blessed ghost.

And soon I heard a roaring wind —
It did not come anear;
But with its sound it shook the sails,
That were so thin and sere.

The upper air burst into life;
And a hundred fire-flags sheen,
To and fro they were hurried about;
And to and fro, and in and out,
The wan stars danced between.

And the coming wind did roar more loud,
And the sails did sigh like sedge;
And the rain poured down from one black cloud —
The moon was at its edge.

The thick black cloud was cleft, and still
The moon was at its side;
Like waters shot from some high crag,
The lightning fell with never a jag —
A river steep and wide.

The loud wind never reached the ship,
Yet now the ship moved on!
Beneath the lightning and the moon
The dead men gave a groan.

They groaned, they stirred, they all uprose —
Nor spake, nor moved their eyes;
It had been strange, even in a dream,
To have seen those dead men rise.

The helmsman steered, the ship moved on;
Yet never a breeze up blew;
The mariners all 'gan work the ropes,
Where they were wont to do;
They raised their limbs like lifeless tools —
We were a ghastly crew.

The body of my brother's son
Stood by me, knee to knee;
The body and I pulled at one rope,
But he said naught to me."

"I fear thee, ancient mariner!"
"Be calm, thou wedding-guest!
'Twas not those souls that fled in pain,
Which to their corses came again,
But a troop of spirits blest;

For when it dawned they dropped their arms,
And clustered round the mast;
Sweet sounds rose slowly through their mouths,
And from their bodies passed.

Around, around flew each sweet sound.
Then darted to the sun;
Slowly the sounds came back again —
Now mixed, now one by one.

Sometimes, a-dropping from the sky,
I heard the sky-lark sing;
Sometimes all little birds that are —
How they seemed to fill the sea and air
With their sweet jargoning!

And now 'twas like all instruments,
Now like a lonely flute;
And now it is an angel's song,
That makes the heavens be mute.

It ceased; yet still the sails made on
A pleasant noise till noon —
A noise like of a hidden brook
In the leafy month of June,
That to the sleeping woods all night
Singeth a quiet tune.

Till noon we quietly sailed on,
Yet never a breeze did breathe;
Slowly and smoothly went the ship,
Moved onward from beneath.

Under the keel, nine fathom deep,
From the land of mist and snow
The spirit slid; and it was he
That made the ship to go.
The sails at noon left off their tune,
And the ship stood still also.

The sun, right up above the mast,
Had fixed her to the ocean;
But in a minute she 'gan stir,
With a short uneasy motion —
Backwards and forwards half her length,
With a short uneasy motion.

Then like a pawing horse let go,
She made a sudden bound —
It flung the blood into my head,
And I fell down in a swound.

How long in that same fit I lay
I have not to declare;
But ere my living life returned
I heard, and in my soul discerned,
Two voices in the air:

'Is it he?' quoth one, 'Is this the man?
By him who died on cross,
With his cruel bow he laid full low
The harmless albatross!

The spirit who bideth by himself
In the land of mist and snow,

He loved the bird that loved the man
Who shot him with his bow.'

The other was a softer voice,
As soft as honey-dew:
Quoth he, 'The man hath penance done,
And penance more will do.'

PART VI.

FIRST VOICE.

'But tell me, tell me! speak again,
Thy soft response renewing —
What makes that ship drive on so fast?
What is the ocean doing?

SECOND VOICE.

'Still as a slave before his lord,
The ocean hath no blast;
His great bright eye most silently
Up to the moon is cast —

If he may know which way to go;
For she guides him smooth or grim.
See, brother, see! how graciously
She looketh down on him.'

FIRST VOICE.

'But why drives on that ship so fast,
Without or wave or wind?'

SECOND VOICE.

'The air is cut away before,
And closes from behind.

Fly, brother, fly! more high, more high!
Or we shall be belated;
For slow and slow that ship will go,
When the mariner's trance is abated.'

I woke, and we were sailing on
As in a gentle weather;
'T was night, calm night — the moon was high;
The dead men stood together.

All stood together on the deck,
For a charnel-dungeon fitter;
All fixed on me their stony eyes,
That in the moon did glitter.

The pang, the curse, with which they died,
Had never passed away;
I could not draw my eyes from theirs,
Nor turn them up to pray.

And now this spell was snapt; once more
I viewed the ocean green,
And looked far forth, yet little saw
Of what had else been seen —

Like one that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And, having once turned round, walks on,

And turns no more his head;
Because he knows a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread.

But soon there breathed a wind on me
Nor sound nor motion made;
Its path was not upon the sea,
In ripple or in shade.

It raised my hair, it fanned my cheek,
Like a meadow-gale of spring —
It mingled strangely with my fears,
Yet it felt like a welcoming.

Swiftly, swiftly flew the ship,
Yet she sailed softly too;
Sweetly, sweetly blew the breeze —
On me alone it blew.

Oh! dream of joy! is this indeed
The light-house top I see?
Is this the hill? is this the kirk?
Is this mine own countree?

We drifted o'er the harbor-bar,
And I with sobs did pray —
Oh let me be awake, my God!
Or let me sleep alway.

The harbor-bay was clear as glass,
So smoothly it was strewn!
And on the bay the moonlight lay,
And the shadow of the moon.

The rock shone bright, the kirk no less
That stands above the rock;
The moonlight steeped in silentness
The steady weathercock.

And the bay was white with silent light
Till, rising from the same,
Full many shapes, that shadows were,
In crimson colors came.

A little distance from the prow
Those crimson shadows were;
I turned my eyes upon the deck —
O Christ! what saw I there!

Each corse lay flat, lifeless and flat;
And, by the holy rood!
A man all light, a seraph-man,
On every corse there stood.

This seraph-band, each waved his hand —
It was a heavenly sight!
They stood as signals to the land,
Each one a lovely light;

This seraph-band, each waved his hand;
No voice did they impart —
No voice; but oh! the silence sank
Like music on my heart.

But soon I heard the dash of oars,
I heard the pilot's cheer;
My head was turned perforce away,
And I saw a boat appear.

The pilot and the pilot's boy,
I heard them coming fast;
Dear Lord in heaven! it was a joy
The dead men could not blast.

I saw a third — I heard his voice;
It is the hermit good!
He singeth loud his godly hymns
That he makes in the wood;
He'll shrieve my soul — he'll wash away
The albatross's blood.

"'Dear Lord! it Hath a Fiendish Look'—(The Pilot Made Reply)."

PART VII.

This hermit good lives in that wood
Which slopes down to the sea.
How loudly his sweet voice he rears!
He loves to talk with marineres
That come from a far countree.

He kneels at morn, and noon, and eve —
He hath a cushion plump;
It is the moss that wholly hides
The rotted old oak-stump.

The skiff-boat neared — I heard them talk:
'Why, this is strange, I trow!
Where are those lights, so many and fair,
That signal made but now?'

'Strange, by my faith!' the hermit said —
'And they answered not our cheer!
The planks look warped! and see those sails,
How thin they are and sere!
I never saw aught like to them,
Unless perchance it were

Brown skeletons of leaves that lag
My forest-brook along,
When the ivy-tod is heavy with snow,
And the owlet whoops to the wolf below,
That eats the she-wolf's young.'

'Dear Lord! it hath a fiendish look,'
The pilot made reply —
'I am a-feared' — 'Push on, push on!'
Said the hermit cheerily.

The boat came closer to the ship,
But I nor spake nor stirred;
The boat came close beneath the ship,
And straight a sound was heard:

Under the water it rumbled on,
Still louder and more dread;
It reached the ship, it split the bay —
The ship went down like lead.

Stunned by that loud and dreadful sound,
Which sky and ocean smote,
Like one that hath been seven days drowned
My body lay afloat;
But, swift as dreams, myself I found
Within the pilot's boat.

Upon the whirl where sank the ship
The boat span round and round;
And all was still, save that the hill
Was telling of the sound.

I moved my lips — the pilot shrieked
And fell down in a fit;
The holy hermit raised his eyes,
And prayed where he did sit.

I took the oars; the pilot's boy,
Who now doth crazy go,
Laughed loud and long; and all the while
His eyes went to and fro:
'Ha! ha!' quoth he, 'full plain I see,
The devil knows how to row.'

And now, all in my own countree,
I stood on the firm land!
The hermit stepped forth from the boat,
And scarcely he could stand.

'Oh shrieve me, shrieve me, holy man!' —
The hermit crossed his brow:
'Say quick,' quoth he, 'I bid thee say —
What manner of man art thou?'

Forthwith this frame of mine was wrenched
With a woful agony,
Which forced me to begin my tale —
And then it left me free.

Since then, at an uncertain hour,
That agony returns;
And till my ghastly tale is told
This heart within me burns.

I pass, like night, from land to land;
I have strange power of speech;
That moment that his face I see
I know the man that must hear me —
To him my tale I teach.

What loud uproar bursts from that door!
The wedding-guests are there;
But in the garden-bower the bride
And bride-maids singing are;
And hark the little vesper bell,
Which biddeth me to prayer!

O wedding-guest! this soul hath been
Alone on a wide, wide sea —
So lonely 't was, that God himself
Scarce seemed there to be.

"This Seraph-Band, Each Waved His Hand
It Was a Heavenly Sight!"

Oh sweeter than the marriage-feast,
'T is sweeter far to me,
To walk together to the kirk
With a goodly company! —

To walk together to the kirk,
And all together pray,
While each to his great Father bends —
Old men, and babes, and loving friends,
And youths and maidens gay!

"While Each to His Great Father Bends, —
Old Men, and Babes, and Loving Friends."

Farewell! farewell! but this I tell
To thee, thou wedding-guest!
He prayeth well who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast.

He prayeth best who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all."

The mariner, whose eye is bright,
Whose beard with age is hoar,
Is gone. And now the wedding-guest
Turned from the bridegroom's door.

He went like one that hath been stunned,
And is of sense forlorn;
A sadder and a wiser man
He rose the morrow morn.

KUBLA KHAN.

IN Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome decree
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran,
Through caverns measureless to man,
Down to a sunless sea.
So twice five miles of fertile ground
With walls and towers were girdled round;
And there were gardens, bright with sinuous rills,
Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree;
And here were forests ancient as the hills,
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.

But oh! that deep romantic chasm, which slanted
Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!
A savage place! as holy and enchanted

As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
By woman wailing for her demon-lover!
And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething
As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing,
A mighty fountain momently was forced,
Amid whose swift, half-intermitted burst
Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,
Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail;
And 'mid these dancing rocks at once and ever
It flung up momently the sacred river.
Five miles, meandering with a mazy motion
Through wood and dale, the sacred river ran —
Then reached the caverns measureless to man,
And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean;
And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far
Ancestral voices prophesying war.

The shadow of the dome of pleasure
Floated midway on the waves,
Where was heard the mingled measure
From the fountain and the caves.
It was a miracle of rare device —
A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!
A damsel with a dulcimer
In a vision once I saw;
It was an Abyssinian maid,
And on her dulcimer she played,
Singing of Mount Abora.
Could I revive within me
Her symphony and song,
To such a deep delight 't would win me
That, with music loud and long,

I would build that dome in air —
That sunny dome! those caves of ice!
And all who heard should see them there,
And all should cry, Beware! beware
His flashing eyes, his floating hair!
Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread,
For he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of Paradise.

JAMES HOGG

(1772–1835.)

KILMENY.

BONNY Kilmeny gaed up the glen;
But it wasna to meet Duneira's men,
Nor the rosy monk of the isle to see,
For Kilmeny was pure as pure could be.
It was only to hear the yorlin sing, —
And pu' the cress-flower round the spring —
The scarlet hypp, and the hind berry,
And the nut that hung frae the hazel tree;
For Kilmeny was pure as pure could be.
But lang may her minny look o'er the wa',
And lang may she seek i' the green-wood shaw;
Lang the laird of Duneira blame,
And lang, lang greet or Kilmeny come hame.

When many a day had come and fled,
When grief grew calm, and hope was dead,
When mass for Kilmeny's soul had been sung,
When the bedes-man had prayed, and the dead-bell rung;

Late, late in a gloamin, when all was still,
When the fringe was red on the westlin hill,
The wood was sere, the moon i' the wane,
The reek o' the cot hung over the plain —
Like a little wee cloud in the world its lane;
When the ingle lowed with an eiry leme,
Late, late in the gloamin Kilmeny came hame!

"Kilmeny, Kilmeny, where have you been?
Lang hae we sought both holt and den —
By linn, by ford, and green-wood tree;
Yet you are halesome and fair to see.
Where got you that joup o' the lily sheen?
That bonny snood of the birk sae green?
And these roses, the fairest that ever was seen?
Kilmeny, Kilmeny, where have you been?"

Kilmeny looked up with a lovely grace,
But nae smile was seen on Kilmeny's face;
As still was her look, and as still was her ee,
As the stillness that lay on the emerant lea,
Or the mist that sleeps on a waveless sea.
For Kilmeny had been she knew not where,
And Kilmeny had seen what she could not declare;
Kilmeny had been where the cock never crew,
Where the rain never fell, and the wind never blew;
But it seemed as the harp of the sky had rung,
And the airs of heaven played round her tongue,
When she spake of the lovely forms she had seen,
And a land where sin had never been —
A land of love, and a land of light,
Withouten sun, or moon, or night;

Where the river swa'd a living stream,
And the light a pure celestial beam:
The land of vision it would seem,
A still, an everlasting dream.
In yon green-wood there is a waik,
And in that waik there is a wene,
And in that wene there is a maike,
That neither has flesh, blood, nor bane;
And down in yon green-wood he walks his lane.

In that green wene, Kilmeny lay,
Her bosom happed wi' the flowerets gay;
But the air was soft, and the silence deep,
And bonny Kilmeny fell sound asleep;
She kend nae mair, nor opened her ee,
Till waked by the hymns of a far countrye.

She 'wakened on a couch of the silk sae slim,
All striped wi' the bars of the rainbow's rim;
And lovely beings around were rife,
Who erst had travelled mortal life;
And aye they smiled, and 'gan to speer:
"What spirit has brought this mortal here!"

"Lang have I journeyed the world wide,"
A meek and reverend fere replied;
"Baith night and day I have watched the fair
Eident a thousand years and mair.
Yes, I have watched o'er ilk degree,
Wherever blooms femenitye;
But sinless virgin, free of stain,
In mind and body, fand I nane.

Never, since the banquet of time,
Found I a virgin in her prime,
Till late this bonny maiden I saw,
As spotless as the morning snaw.
Full twenty years she has lived as free
As the spirits that sojourn in this countrye.
I have brought her away frae the snares of men,
That sin or death she may never ken."

They clasped her waist and her hands sae fair;
They kissed her cheek, and they kemed her hair;
And round came many a blooming fere,
Saying, "Bonny Kilmeny, ye're welcome here;
Women are freed of the littand scorn;
Oh, blest be the day Kilmeny was born!
Now shall the land of the spirits see,
Now shall it ken, what a woman may be!
Many a lang year in sorrow and pain,
Many a lang year through the world we've gane,
Commissioned to watch fair womankind,
For it's they who nurice the immortal mind.
We have watched their steps as the dawning shone,
And deep in the green-wood walks alone;
By lily bower and silken bed
The viewless tears have o'er them shed;
Have soothed their ardent minds to sleep,
Or left the couch of love to weep.
We have seen! we have seen! but the time must come,
And the angels will weep at the day of doom!

"Oh, would the fairest of mortal kind
Aye keep the holy truths in mind,

That kindred spirits their motions see,
Who watch their ways with anxious ee,
And grieve for the guilt of humanitye!
Oh, sweet to heaven the maiden's prayer,
And the sigh that heaves a bosom sae fair!
And dear to heaven the words of truth
And the praise of virtue frae beauty's mouth!
And dear to the viewless forms of air,
The minds that kythe as the body fair!

"O, bonny Kilmeny! free frae stain,
If ever you seek the world again —
That world of sin, of sorrow and fear —
Oh, tell of the joys that are waiting here;
And tell of the signs you shall shortly see;
Of the times that are now, and the times that shall be."—

They lifted Kilmeny, they led her away,
And she walked in the light of a sunless day;
The sky was a dome of crystal bright,
The fountain of vision, and fountain of light;
The emerald fields were of dazzling glow,
And the flowers of everlasting blow.
Then deep in the stream her body they laid,
That her youth and beauty never might fade;
And they smiled on heaven, when they saw her lie
In the stream of life that wandered by.
And she heard a song — she heard it sung,
She kend not where; but sae sweetly it rung,
It fell on her ear like a dream of the morn —
"Oh! blest be the day Kilmeny was born!
Now shall the land of the spirits see,

Now shall it ken, what a woman may be!
The sun that shines on the world sae bright,
A borrowed gleid frae the fountain of light;
And the moon that sleeks the sky sae dun,
Like a gouden bow, or a beamless sun —
Shall wear away, and be seen nae mair;
And the angels shall miss them, travelling the air.
But lang, lang after baith night and day,
When the sun and the world have elyed away,
When the sinner has gane to his waesome doom,
Kilmeny shall smile in eternal bloom!" —

They bore her away, she wist not how,
For she felt not arm nor rest below;
But so swift they wained her through the light,
'Twas like the motion of sound or sight;
They seemed to split the gales of air,
And yet nor gale nor breeze was there.
Unnumbered groves below them grew;
They came, they past, and backward flew,
Like floods of blossoms gliding on,
In moment seen, in moment gone.
Oh, never vales to mortal view
Appeared like those o'er which they flew!
That land to human spirits given,
The lowermost vales of the storied heaven;
From whence they can view the world below,
And heaven's blue gates with sapphires glow —
More glory yet unmeet to know.

They bore her far to a mountain green,
To see what mortal never had seen;

And they seated her high on a purple sward,
And bade her heed what she saw and heard,
And note the changes the spirits wrought;
For now she lived in the land of thought. —
She looked, and she saw nor sun nor skies,
But a crystal dome of a thousand dyes;
She looked, and she saw nae land aright,
But an endless whirl of glory and light;
And radiant beings went and came,
Far swifter than wind, or the linked flame.
She hid her een frae the dazzling view;
She looked again, and the scene was new.

She saw a sun on a summer sky,
And clouds of amber sailing by;
A lovely land beneath her lay,
And that land had glens and mountains gray;
And that land had valleys and hoary piles,
And marled seas, and a thousand isles;
Its fields were speckled, its forests green,
And its lakes were all of the dazzling sheen,
Like magic mirrors, where slumbering lay
The sun and the sky and the cloudlet gray,
Which heaved and trembled, and gently swung;
On every shore they seemed to be hung;
For there they were seen on their downward plain
A thousand times and a thousand again;
In winding lake and placid firth —
Little peaceful heavens in the bosom of earth.

Kilmeny sighed and seemed to grieve,
For she found her heart to that land did cleave;

She saw the corn wave on the vale;
She saw the deer run down the dale;
She saw the plaid and the broad claymore,
And the brows that the badge of freedom bore;
And she thought she had seen the land before.

She saw a lady sit on a throne,
The fairest that ever the sun shone on!
A lion licked her hand of milk,
And she held him in a leish of silk,
And a leifu' maiden stood at her knee,
With a silver wand and melting ee —
Her sovereign shield, till love stole in,
And poisoned all the fount within.

Then a gruff, untoward bedes-man came,
And hundit the lion on his dame;
And the guardian maid wi' the dauntless ee,
She dropped a tear, and left her knee;
And she saw till the queen frae the lion fled,
Till the bonniest flower of the world lay dead;
A coffin was set on a distant plain,
And she saw the red blood fall like rain.
Then bonny Kilmeny's heart grew sair,
And she turned away, and could look nae mair.

Then the gruff, grim carle girnéd amain,
And they trampled him down — but he rose again;
And he baited the lion to deeds of weir,
Till he lapped the blood to the kingdom dear;
And, weening his head was danger-preef
When crowned with the rose and clover leaf,

He growled at the carle, and chased him away
To feed wi' the deer on the mountain gray.
He growled at the carle, and he gecked at heaven
But his mark was set, and his arles given.
Kilmeny a while her een withdrew;
She looked again, and the scene was new.

She saw below her, fair unfurled,
One half of all the glowing world,
Where oceans rolled and rivers ran,
To bound the aims of sinful man.
She saw a people fierce and fell,
Burst frae their bounds like fiends of hell;
There lilies grew, and the eagle flew;
And she herked on her ravening crew,
Till the cities and towers were wrapt in a blaze,
And the thunder it roared o'er the lands and the seas.
The widows they wailed, and the red blood ran,
And she threatened an end to the race of man.
She never lened, nor stood in awe,
Till caught by the lion's deadly paw.
Oh! then the eagle swinked for life,
And brainzelled up a mortal strife;
But flew she north, or flew she south,
She met wi' the growl of the lion's mouth.

With a mooted wing and waefu' maen,
The eagle sought her eiry again;
But lang may she cower in her bloody nest,
And lang, lang sleek her wounded breast,
Before she sey another flight,
To play wi' the norland lion's might.

But to sing the sights Kilmeny saw,
So far surpassing nature's law,
The singer's voice wad sink away,
And the string of his harp wad cease to play.
But she saw till the sorrows of man were by,
And all was love and harmony;
Till the stars of heaven fell calmly away,
Like the flakes of snaw on a winter's day.

Then Kilmeny begged again to see
The friends she had left in her own countrye,
To tell of the place where she had been,
And the glories that lay in the land unseen;
To warn the living maidens fair,
The loved of heaven, the spirits' care,
That all whose minds unmeled remain
Shall bloom in beauty when time is gane.

With distant music, soft and deep,
They lulled Kilmeny sound asleep;
And when she awakened, she lay her lane,
All happed with flowers in the green-wood wene.
When seven long years had come and fled;
When grief was calm, and hope was dead;
When scarce was remembered Kilmeny's name,
Late, late in a gloamin, Kilmeny came hame!
And oh, her beauty was fair to see,
But still and steadfast was her ee!
Such beauty bard may never declare,
For there was no pride nor passion there;
And the soft desire of maidens' een,
In that mild face could never be seen.

Her seymar was the lily flower,
And her cheek the moss-rose in the shower;
And her voice like the distant melodye
That floats along the twilight sea.
But she loved to rake the lanely glen,
And keeped afar frae the haunts of men;
Her holy hymns unheard to sing,
To suck the flowers and drink the spring.
But wherever her peaceful form appeared,
The wild beasts of the hills were cheered;
The wolf played blythely round the field,
The lordly byson lowed and kneeled;
The dun deer wooed with manner bland,
And cowered aneath her lily hand.
And when at even the woodlands rung,
When hymns of other worlds she sung
In ecstasy of sweet devotion,
Oh, then the glen was all in motion!
The wild beasts of the forest came,
Broke from their bughts and faulds the tame,
And goved around, charmed and amazed;
Even the dull cattle crooned and gazed,
And murmured and looked with anxious pain,
For something the mystery to explain.
The buzzard came with the throstle-cock,
The corby left her houf in the rock;
The black-bird alang wi' the eagle flew;
The hind came tripping o'er the dew;
The wolf and the kid their raike began;
And the tod, and the lamb, and the leveret ran
The hawk and the hern attour them hung,
And the merle and the mavis forhooyed their young;

And all in a peaceful ring were hurled :
It was like an eve in a sinless world !

When a month and day had come and gane,
Kilmeny sought the green-wood wene ;
There laid her down on the leaves sae green,
And Kilmeny on earth was never mair seen.
But oh, the words that fell from her mouth,
Were words of wonder, and words of truth !
But all the land were in fear and dread,
For they kend na whether she was living or dead.
It wasna her hame, and she couldna remain ;
She left this world of sorrow and pain,
And returned to the land of thought again.

ROBERT SOUTHEY

(1774–1843.)

THE BATTLE OF BLENHEIM.

I.

IT was a summer evening —
Old Kaspar's work was done,
And he before his cottage door
Was sitting in the sun;
And by him sported on the green
His little grandchild Wilhelmine.

II.

She saw her brother Peterkin
Roll something large and round,
Which he beside the rivulet,
In playing there, had found;
He came to ask what he had found,
That was so large, and smooth, and round.

III.

Old Kaspar took it from the boy,
Who stood expectant by;
And then the old man shook his head,
And, with a natural sigh —
"'Tis some poor fellow's skull," said he,
"Who fell in the great victory.

IV.

I find them in the garden,
For there's many here about;
And often when I go to plough,
The ploughshare turns them out;
For many thousand men," said he,
"Were slain in the great victory."

V.

"Now tell us what 'twas all about,"
Young Peterkin he cries;
And little Wilhelmine looks up
With wonder-waiting eyes—
"Now tell us all about the war,
And what they fought each other for."

VI.

"It was the English," Kaspar cried,
"Who put the French to rout;
But what they fought each other for
I could not well make out;
But everybody said," quoth he,
"That 'twas a famous victory.

VII.

My father lived at Blenheim then,
Yon little stream hard by;
They burnt his dwelling to the ground,
And he was forced to fly;
So with his wife and child he fled,
Nor had he where to rest his head.

VIII.

With fire and sword the country round
Was wasted far and wide;
And many a childing mother there,
And new-born baby died;
But things like that, you know, must be
At every famous victory.

IX.

They say it was a shocking sight
After the field was won —
For many thousand bodies here
Lay rotting in the sun;
But things like that, you know, must be
After a famous victory.

X.

Great praise the Duke of Marlbro' won,
And our good Prince Eugene."
"Why, 'twas a very wicked thing!"
Said little Wilhelmine.
"Nay — nay — my little girl!" quoth he,
"It was a famous victory.

XI.

And everybody praised the duke,
Who this great fight did win."
"But what good came of it at last?"
Quoth little Peterkin.
"Why, that I cannot tell," said he;
"But 'twas a famous victory."

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR

(1775–1864.)

THE ONE GRAY HAIR.

THE wisest of the wise
Listen to pretty lies,
And love to hear them told;
Doubt not that Solomon
Listened to many a one —
Some in his youth, and more when he grew old.

I never sat among
The choir of wisdom's song,
But pretty lies loved I
As much as any king —
When youth was on the wing,
And (must it then be told?) when youth had quite gone by.

Alas! and I have not
The pleasant hour forgot,
When one pert lady said —
"O, Landor! I am quite
Bewildered with affright;
I see (sit quiet now!) a white hair on your head!"

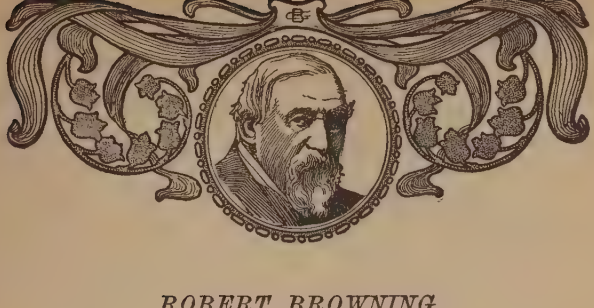
Another, more benign,
Drew out that hair of mine,
And in her own dark hair
Pretended she had found
That one, and twirled it round.—
Fair as she was, she never was so fair.

ON HIMSELF.

I STROVE with none, for none was worth my strife;
Nature I lov'd, and next to Nature, Art;
I warm'd both hands before the fire of life;
It sinks, and I am ready to depart.

ROSE AYLMER.

AH what avails the sceptered race,
Ah what the form divine!
What every virtue, every grace!
Rose Aylmer, all were thine.
Rose Aylmer, whom these wakeful eyes
May weep, but never see,
A night of memories and of sighs
I consecrate to thee.



ROBERT BROWNING.

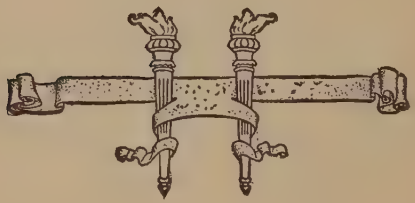
THERE is delight in singing, though none hear
Beside the singer; and there is delight
In praising, though the praiser sit alone
And see the prais'd far off him, far above.
Shakspeare is not our poet, but the world's,
Therefore on him no speech! and brief for thee,
Browning! Since Chaucer was alive and hale,
No man hath walk'd along our roads with step
So active, so enquiring eye, or tongue
So varied in discourse. But warmer climes
Give brighter plumage, stronger wing: the breeze
Of Alpine heights thou playest with, borne on
Beyond Sorrento and Amalfi, where
The Siren waits thee, singing song for song.

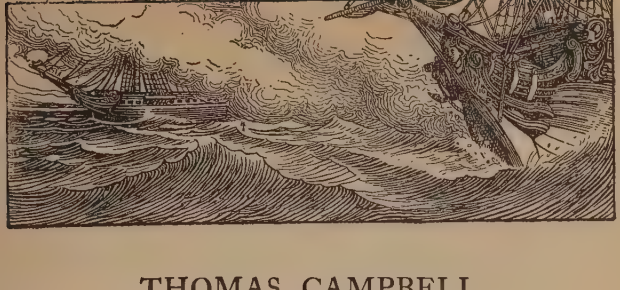
DIRCE.

STAND close around, ye Stygian set,
With Dirce in one boat convey'd,
Or Charon, seeing, may forget
That he is old, and she a shade.

ON LUCRETIA BORGIA'S HAIR.

BORGIA, thou once wert almost too august
And high for adoration; now thou'rt dust;
All that remains of thee these plaits unfold,
Calm hair meandering in pellucid gold.





THOMAS CAMPBELL

(1777—1844.)

YE MARINERS OF ENGLAND:

A NAVAL ODE.

I.

YE mariners of England!
That guard our native seas;
Whose flag has braved, a thousand years,
The battle and the breeze!
Your glorious standard launch again,
To match another foe!
And sweep through the deep
While the stormy winds do blow;
While the battle rages loud and long,
And the stormy winds do blow.

II.

The spirits of your fathers
Shall start from every wave!—
For the deck it was their field of fame,
And ocean was their grave.

Where Blake and mighty Nelson fell
Your manly hearts shall glow,
As ye sweep through the deep
While the stormy winds do blow —
While the battle rages loud and long,
And the stormy winds do blow.

III.

Britannia needs no bulwarks,
No towers along the steep;
Her march is o'er the mountain-wave,
Her home is on the deep.
With thunders from her native oak
She quells the floods below,
As they roar on the shore
When the stormy winds do blow —
When the battle rages loud and long,
And the stormy winds do blow.

IV.

The meteor flag of England
Shall yet terrific burn,
Till danger's troubled night depart,
And the star of peace return.
Then, then, ye ocean-warriors!
Our song and feast shall flow
To the fame of your name,
When the storm has ceased to blow —
When the fiery fight is heard no more,
And the storm has ceased to blow.

FRANCIS SCOTT KEY

(1779–1843.)

THE STAR SPANGLED BANNER.

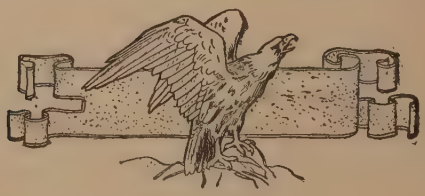
O SAY, can you see, by the dawn's early light,
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming —
Whose broad stripes and bright stars, through the clouds of the fight,
O'er the ramparts we watched were so gallantly streaming!
And the rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there;
O! say, does that star-spangled banner yet wave
O'er the land of the free, and the home of the brave?

On that shore dimly seen through the mists of the deep,
Where the foe's haughty host in dread silence reposes,
What is that which the breeze, o'er the towering steep,
As it fitfully blows, now conceals, now discloses?

Now it catches the gleam of the morning's first beam,
In full glory reflected now shines on the stream;
'Tis the star-spangled banner; O long may it wave
O'er the land of the free, and the home of the brave!

And where is that band who so vauntingly swore
That the havoc of war and the battle's confusion
A home and a country should leave us no more?
Their blood has washed out their foul footsteps' pollution.
No refuge could save the hireling and slave
From the terror of flight, or the gloom of the grave;
And the star-spangled banner in triumph doth wave
O'er the land of the free, and the home of the brave.

O! thus be it ever, when freemen shall stand
Between their loved homes and the war's desolation!
Blest with victory and peace, may the heav'n-rescued land
Praise the power that hath made and preserved us a nation.
Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just,
And this be our motto — "*In God is our trust:*"
And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave
O'er the land of the free, and the home of the brave.



"'Tis the Star-Spangled Banner; O Long May it Wave
O'er the Land of the Free, and the Home of the Brave!

THOMAS MOORE

(1779–1852.)

THE HARP THAT ONCE.

THE harp that once through Tara's halls
The soul of music shed,
Now hangs as mute on Tara's walls,
As if that soul were fled.
So sleeps the pride of former days,
So glory's thrill is o'er,
And hearts that once beat high for praise,
Now feel that pulse no more.

No more to chiefs and ladies bright
The harp of Tara swells;
The chord alone that breaks at night
Its tale of ruin tells;
Thus freedom now so seldom wakes,
The only throb she gives
Is when some heart indignant breaks
To show that still she lives.

THOSE EVENING BELLS.

THOSE evening bells! those evening bells!
How many a tale their music tells,
Of youth, and home, and that sweet time
When last I heard their soothing chime!

Those joyous hours are passed away;
And many a heart that then was gay,
Within the tomb now darkly dwells,
And hears no more those evening bells.

And so 'twill be when I am gone —
That tuneful peal will still ring on;
While other bards shall walk these dells,
And sing your praise, sweet evening bells.

CLEMENT CLARKE MOORE

(1779–1863.)

A VISIT FROM ST. NICHOLAS.

'TWAS the night before Christmas, when all
through the house
Not a creature was stirring, not even a
mouse;
The stockings were hung by the chimney with care,
In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there;
The children were nestled all snug in their beds,
While visions of sugar-plums danced in their heads;
And Mamma in her kerchief, and I in my cap,
Had just settled our brains for a long winter's nap —
When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,
I sprang from my bed to see what was the matter.
Away to the window I flew like a flash,
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash.
The moon, on the breast of the new-fallen snow,
Gave a lustre of mid-day to objects below;
When, what to my wondering eyes should appear,
But a miniature sleigh, and eight tiny reindeer,

With a little old driver, so lively and quick,
I knew in a moment it must be St. Nick.
More rapid than eagles his coursers they came,
And he whistled, and shouted, and called them by name;
"Now, Dasher! now, Dancer! now, Prancer and Vixen!
On! Comet, on! Cupid, on! Donder and Blitzen —
To the top of the porch, to the top of the wall!
Now, dash away, dash away, dash away all!"
As dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly,
When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky,
So, up to the house-top the coursers they flew,
With the sleigh full of toys — and St. Nicholas too.
And then in a twinkling I heard on the roof
The prancing and pawing of each little hoof.
As I drew in my head, and was turning around,
Down the chimney St. Nicholas came with a bound.
He was dressed all in fur from his head to his foot,
And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot;
A bundle of toys he had flung on his back,
And he looked like a pedler just opening his pack.
His eyes how they twinkled! his dimples how merry!
His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry;
His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow,
And the beard on his chin was as white as the snow.
The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth,
And the smoke, it encircled his head like a wreath.
He had a broad face and a little round belly
That shook, when he laughed, like a bowl full of jelly.
He was chubby and plump — a right jolly old elf;
And I laughed when I saw him, in spite of myself.
A wink of his eye, and a twist of his head,

Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread.
He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work,
And filled all the stockings; then turned with a jerk,
And laying his finger aside of his nose,
And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose.
He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle,
And away they all flew like the down of a thistle;
But I heard him exclaim, ere he drove out of sight,
"Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good-night!"

LEIGH HUNT

(1784–1859.)

ABOU BEN ADHEM.

ABOU BEN ADHEM (may his tribe increase!)
Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace,
And saw within the moonlight in his room,
Making it rich and like a lily in bloom,
An angel writing in a book of gold:
Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem bold,
And to the presence in the room he said,
"What writest thou?" — The vision raised its head,
And, with a look made of all sweet accord,
Answered — "The names of those who love the Lord."
"And is mine one?" said Abou; "Nay, not so,"
Replied the angel. — Abou spoke more low,
But cheerly still; and said, "I pray thee, then,
Write me as one that loves his fellow-men."

The angel wrote, and vanished. The next night
It came again, with a great wakening light,
And showed the names whom love of God had blessed —
And, lo! Ben Adhem's name led all the rest!

SAMUEL WOODWORTH

(1785–1842.)

THE OLD OAKEN BUCKET.

HOW dear to this heart are the scenes of my childhood,
When fond recollection presents them to view!
The orchard, the meadow, the deep-tangled wild-wood,
And every loved spot which my infancy knew!
The wide-spreading pond, and the mill that stood by it,
The bridge, and the rock where the cataract fell,
The cot of my father, the dairy-house nigh it,
And e'en the rude bucket that hung in the well—
The old oaken bucket, the iron-bound bucket,
The moss-covered bucket which hung in the well.

That moss-covered vessel I hailed as a treasure,
For often at noon, when returned from the field,
I found it the source of an exquisite pleasure,
The purest and sweetest that nature can yield.

How ardent I seized it, with hands that were glowing,
And quick to the white-pebbled bottom it fell;
Then soon, with the emblem of truth overflowing,
And dripping with coolness, it rose from the well—
The old oaken bucket, the iron-bound bucket,
The moss-covered bucket arose from the well.

How sweet from the green mossy brim to receive it,
As poised on the curb it inclined to my lips!
Not a full blushing goblet could tempt me to leave it,
The brightest that beauty or revelry sips.
And now, far removed from the loved habitation,
The tear of regret will intrusively swell,
As fancy reverts to my father's plantation,
And sighs for the bucket that hangs in the well—
The old oaken bucket, the iron-bound bucket,
The moss-covered bucket that hangs in the well!

LORD BYRON

(1788–1824.)

SHE WALKS IN BEAUTY.

SHE walks in beauty like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meets in her aspect and her eyes:
Thus mellowed to that tender light
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade the more, one ray the less,
Had half impaired the nameless grace
Which waves in every raven tress,
Or softly lightens o'er her face —
Where thoughts serenely sweet express
How pure, how dear their dwelling place.

And on that cheek and o'er that brow,
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,
But tell of days in goodness spent,
A mind at peace with all below,
A heart whose love is innocent.

THE EVE OF WATERLOO.

THERE was a sound of revelry by night,
And Belgium's capital had gathered then
Her beauty and her chivalry; and bright
The lamps shone o'er fair women and brave men.
A thousand hearts beat happily; and when
Music arose with its voluptuous swell,
Soft eyes looked love to eyes which spake again,
And all went merry as a marriage-bell:
But hush! hark! a deep sound strikes like a rising knell!

Did ye not hear it? No; 'twas but the wind,
Or the car rattling o'er the stony street.
On with the dance! let joy be unconfined!
No sleep till morn, when Youth and Pleasure meet
To chase the glowing hours with flying feet!
But hark! — that heavy sound breaks in once more,
As if the clouds its echo would repeat;
And nearer, clearer, deadlier, than before!
Arm! arm! it is — it is the cannon's opening roar!

Ah! then and there was hurrying to and fro,
And gathering tears, and tremblings of distress,
And cheeks all pale, which, but an hour ago,
Blushed at the praise of their own loveliness;
And there were sudden partings, such as press
The life from out young hearts, and choking sighs
Which ne'er might be repeated: who could guess
If ever more should meet those mutual eyes,
Since upon night so sweet such awful morn could rise?

And there was mounting in hot haste: the steed,
The mustering squadron, and the clattering car
Went pouring forward with impetuous speed,
And swiftly forming in the ranks of war;
And the deep thunder peal on peal afar;
And near, the beat of the alarming drum
Roused up the soldier ere the morning star;
While thronged the citizens with terror dumb,
Or whispering with white lips, "The foe! They come! They come!"

And Ardennes waves above them her green leaves,
Dewy with nature's tear-drops, as they pass,
Grieving, if aught inanimate e'er grieves,
Over the unreturning brave — alas!
Ere evening to be trodden like the grass
Which, now beneath them, but above shall grow
In its next verdure, when this fiery mass
Of living valor, rolling on the foe,
And burning with high hope, shall moulder cold and low.

Last noon beheld them full of lusty life,
Last eve in Beauty's circle proudly gay;

The midnight brought the signal-sound of strife,
The morn the marshalling in arms, — the day,
Battle's magnificently stern array!
The thunder-clouds close o'er it, which, when rent,
The earth is covered thick with other clay,
Which her own clay shall cover, heaped and pent,
Rider and horse — friend, foe — in one red burial blent!

FITZ GREENE HALLECK

(1790–1867.)

BURNS.

TO A ROSE, BROUGHT FROM NEAR ALLOWAY KIRK, IN AYRSHIRE, IN THE AUTUMN OF 1822.

WILD Rose of Alloway! my thanks;
Thou 'mindst me of that autumn noon
When first we met upon "the banks
And braes of bonny Doon."

Like thine, beneath the thorn-tree's bough,
My sunny hour was glad and brief;
We've crossed the winter sea, and thou
Art withered — flower and leaf.

And will not thy death-doom be mine —
The doom of all things wrought of clay —
And withered my life's leaf like thine,
Wild rose of Alloway?

Not so his memory, — for his sake
My bosom bore thee far and long,

His — who a humbler flower could make
Immortal as his song.

The memory of Burns — a name
That calls, when brimmed her festal cup,
A nation's glory and her shame,
In silent sadness up.

A nation's glory — be the rest.
Forgot — she's canonized his mind;
And it is joy to speak the best
We may of human kind.

I've stood beside the cottage-bed
Where the Bard-peasant first drew breath;
A straw-thatched roof above his head,
A straw-wrought couch beneath.

And I have stood beside the pile,
His monument — that tells to Heaven
The homage of earth's proudest isle
To that Bard-peasant given!

Bid thy thoughts hover o'er that spot,
Boy-minstrel, in thy dreaming hour;
And know, however low his lot,
A Poet's pride and power:

The pride that lifted Burns from earth,
The power that gave a child of song
Ascendency o'er rank and birth,
The rich, the brave, the strong;

And if despondency weigh down
Thy spirit's fluttering pinions then,
Despair — thy name is written on
The roll of common men.

There have been loftier themes than his,
And longer scrolls, and louder lyres,
And lays lit up with Poesy's
Purer and holier fires;

Yet read the names that know not death;
Few nobler ones than Burns are there;
And few have won a greener wreath
Than that which binds his hair.

His is that language of the heart,
In which the answering heart would speak, —
Thought, word, that bids the warm tear start,
Or the smile light the cheek;

And his that music, to whose tone
The common pulse of man keeps time,
In cot or castle's mirth or moan,
In cold or sunny clime.

And who hath heard his song, nor knelt
Before its spell with willing knee,
And listened, and believed, and felt
The Poet's mastery

O'er the mind's sea, in calm and storm,
O'er the heart's sunshine and its showers,
O'er Passion's moments bright and warm,
O'er Reason's dark, cold hours;

On fields where brave men "die or do,"
In halls where rings the banquet's mirth,
Where mourners weep, where lovers woo,
From throne to cottage-hearth?

What sweet tears dim the eye unshed,
What wild vows falter on the tongue,
When "Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled,"
Or "Auld Lang Syne" is sung!

Pure hopes, that lift the soul above,
Come with his Cotter's hymn of praise,
And dreams of youth, and truth, and love,
With "Logan's" banks and braes.

And when he breathes his master-lay
Of Alloway's witch-haunted wall,
All passions in our frames of clay
Come thronging at his call

Imagination's world of air,
And our own world, its gloom and glee,
Wit, pathos, poetry, are there,
And death's sublimity.

And Burns — though brief the race he ran,
Though rough and dark the path he trod,
Lived — died — in form and soul a Man,
The image of his God.

Through care, and pain, and want, and woe,
With wounds that only death could heal,
Tortures — the poor alone can know,
The proud alone can feel;

He kept his honesty and truth,
His independent tongue and pen,
And moved, in manhood as in youth,
Pride of his fellow-men.

Strong sense, deep feeling, passions strong,
A hate of tyrant and of knave,
A love of right, a scorn of wrong,
Of coward and of slave;

A kind, true heart, a spirit high,
That could not fear and would not bow,
Were written in his manly eye
And on his manly brow.

Praise to the bard! his words are driven,
Like flower-seeds by the far winds sown,
Where'er, beneath the sky of heaven,
The birds of fame have flown.

Praise to the man! a nation stood
Beside his coffin with wet eyes,
Her brave, her beautiful, her good,
As when a loved one dies.

And still, as on his funeral-day,
Men stand his cold earth-couch around,
With the mute homage that we pay
To consecrated ground.

And consecrated ground it is,
The last, the hallowed home of one
Who lives upon all memories,
Though with the buried gone.

Such graves as his are pilgrim-shrines,
Shrines to no code nor creed confined —
The Delphian vales, the Palestines,
The Meccas of the mind.

Sages with wisdom's garland wreathed,
Crowned kings, and mitred priests of power,
And warriors with their bright swords sheathed,
The mightiest of the hour;

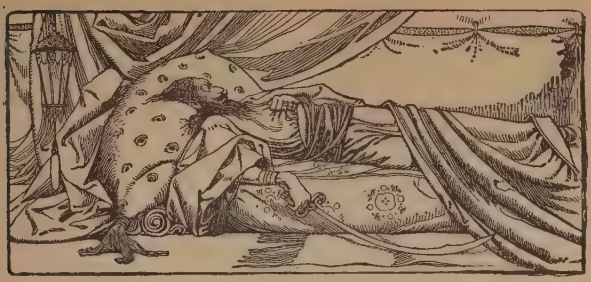
And lowlier names, whose humble home
Is lit by fortune's dimmer star,
Are there — o'er wave and mountain come,
From countries near and far;

Pilgrims whose wandering feet have pressed
The Switzer's snow, the Arab's sand,
Or trod the piled leaves of the West,
My own green forest-land.

All ask the cottage of his birth,
Gaze on the scenes he loved and sung,
And gather feelings not of earth
His fields and streams among.

They linger by the Doon's low trees,
And pastoral Nith, and wooded Ayr,
And round thy sepulchres, Dumfries!
The poet's tomb is there.

But what to them the sculptor's art,
His funeral columns, wreaths and urns?
Wear they not graven on the heart
The name of Robert Burns?



MARCO BOZZARIS.

AT midnight, in his guarded tent,
The Turk was dreaming of the hour
When Greece, her knee in suppliance bent,
Should tremble at his power:
In dreams, through camp and court, he bore
The trophies of a conqueror;
In dreams his song of triumph heard;
Then wore his monarch's signet ring:
Then pressed that monarch's throne — a king;
As wild his thoughts, and gay of wing,
As Eden's garden bird.

At midnight, in the forest shades,
Bozzaris ranged his Suliote band,
True as the steel of their tried blades,
Heroes in heart and hand.
There had the Persian's thousands stood,
There had the glad earth drunk their blood
On old Platæa's day;
And now there breathed that haunted air
The sons of sires who conquered there,
With arm to strike and soul to dare,
As quick, as far as they.

An hour passed on — the Turk awoke;
That bright dream was his last;
He woke — to hear his sentries shriek,
"To arms! they come! the Greek! the Greek!"
He woke — to die midst flame, and smoke,
And shout, and groan, and sabre-stroke,
And death-shots falling thick and fast
As lightnings from the mountain-cloud;
And heard, with voice as trumpet loud,
Bozzaris cheer his band;
"Strike — till the last armed foe expires;
Strike — for your altars and your fires;
Strike — for the green graves of your sires;
God — and your native land!"

They fought — like brave men, long and well;
They piled that ground with Moslem slain,
They conquered — but Bozzaris fell,
Bleeding at every vein.
His few surviving comrades saw
His smile when rang their proud hurrah,
And the red field was won;
Then saw in death his eyelids close
Calmly, as to a night's repose,
Like flowers at set of sun.

Come to the bridal-chamber, Death!
Come to the mother's, when she feels,
For the first time, her first-born's breath;
Come when the blessed seals
That close the pestilence are broke,
And crowded cities wail its stroke;

Come in consumption's ghastly form,
The earthquake shock, the ocean storm;
Come when the heart beats high and warm
  With banquet-song, and dance, and wine;
And thou art terrible — the tear,
The groan, the knell, the pall, the bier,
And all we know, or dream, or fear
  Of agony, are thine.

But to the hero, when his sword
  Has won the battle for the free,
Thy voice sounds like a prophet's word;
And in its hollow tones are heard
  The thanks of millions yet to be.
Come, when his task of fame is wrought —
Come, with her laurel-leaf, blood-bought —
  Come in her crowning hour — and then
Thy sunken's eye's unearthly light
To him is welcome as the sight
  Of sky and stars to prisoned men;
Thy grasp is welcome as the hand
Of brother in a foreign land;
Thy summons welcome as the cry
That told the Indian isles were nigh
  To the world-seeking Genoese,
When the land wind, from woods of palm,
And orange-groves, and fields of balm,
  Blew o'er the Haytian seas.

Bozzaris! with the storied brave
  Greece nurtured in her glory's time,

Rest thee — there is no prouder grave,
Even in her own proud clime.
She wore no funeral-weeds for thee,
Nor bade the dark hearse wave its plume
Like torn branch from death's leafless tree
In sorrow's pomp and pageantry,
The heartless luxury of the tomb;
But she remembers thee as one
Long loved and for a season gone;
For thee her poet's lyre is wreathed,
Her marble wrought, her music breathed;
For thee she rings the birthday bells;
Of thee her babe's first lisping tells;
For thine her evening prayer is said
At palace-couch and cottage-bed;
Her soldier, closing with the foe,
Gives for thy sake a deadlier blow;
His plighted maiden, when she fears
For him the joy of her young years,
Thinks of thy fate, and checks her tears;
And she, the mother of thy boys,
Though in her eye and faded cheek
Is read the grief she will not speak,
The memory of her buried joys,
And even she who gave thee birth,
Will, by their pilgrim-circled hearth,
Talk of thy doom without a sigh;
For thou art Freedom's now, and Fame's:
One of the few, the immortal names,
That were not born to die.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

(1792–1822.)

TO THE SKYLARK.

HAIL to thee, blithe spirit!
Bird thou never wert,
That from heaven, or near it,
Pourest thy full heart
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

Higher still and higher,
From the earth thou springest,
Like a cloud of fire;
The blue deep thou wingest,
And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.

In the golden lightning
Of the setting sun,
O'er which clouds are brightening,
Thou dost float and run;
Like an embodied joy whose race is just begun.

The pale, purple even
Melts around thy flight;
Like a star of heaven,
In the broad daylight
Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill delight.

Keen as are the arrows
Of that silver sphere,
Whose intense lamp narrows
In the white dawn clear,
Until we hardly see, we feel that it is there.

All the earth and air
With thy voice is loud,
As, when night is bare,
From one lonely cloud
The moon rains out her beams, and heaven is overflowed.

What thou art we know not;
What is most like thee?
From rainbow-clouds there flow not
Drops so bright to see,
As from thy presence showers a rain of melody.

Like a poet hidden
In the light of thought,
Singing hymns unbidden,
Till the world is wrought
To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not;

Like a high-born maiden,
In a palace tower,

Soothing her love-laden
Soul in secret hour
With music sweet as love, which overflows her bower;

Like a glow-worm golden,
In a dell of dew,
Scattering unbeholden
Its aërial hue
Among the flowers and grass which screen it from the view;

Like a rose embowered
In its own green leaves,
By warm winds deflowered,
Till the scent it gives
Makes faint with too much sweet these heavy-winged thieves.

Sound of vernal showers
On the twinkling grass,
Rain-awakened flowers
All that ever was
Joyous, and fresh, and clear, thy music doth surpass.

Teach us, sprite or bird,
What sweet thoughts are thine:
I have never heard
Praise of love or wine
That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine.

Chorus hymeneal,
Or triumphant chant,

Matched with thine would be all
But an empty vaunt —
A thing wherein we feel there is some hidden want.

What objects are the fountains
Of thy happy strain?
What fields, or waves, or mountains?
What shapes of sky or plain?
What love of thine own kind? what ignorance of pain?

With thy clear, keen joyance
Languor cannot be;
Shades of annoyance
Never come near thee;
Thou lovest, but ne'er knew love's sad satiety.

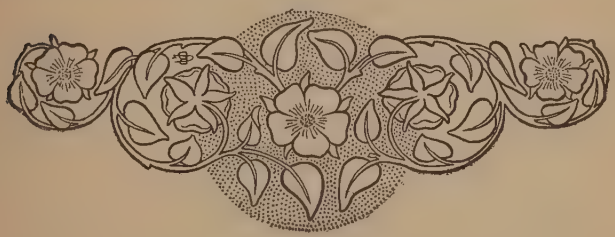
Waking, or asleep,
Thou of death must deem
Things more true or deep
Than we mortals dream;
Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream?

We look before and after,
And pine for what is not;
Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught;
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

Yet if we could scorn
Hate, and pride, and fear;
If we were things born
Not to shed a tear,
I know not how thy joy we ever should come near.

Better than all measures
Of delightful sound;
Better than all treasures
That in books are found,
Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground!

Teach me half the gladness
That thy brain must know,
Such harmonious madness
From my lips would flow,
The world should listen then, as I am listening now.



TO ———.

MUSIC, when soft voices die,
Vibrates in the memory —
Odors, when sweet violets sicken,
Live within the sense they quicken.

Rose leaves, when the rose is dead,
Are heap'd for the beloved's bed;
And so thy thoughts, when thou art gone,
Love itself shall slumber on.

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT

(1794–1878.)

THANATOPSIS.

TO him who in the love of nature holds
Communion with her visible forms, she speaks
A various language; for his gayer hours
She has a voice of gladness, and a smile
And eloquence of beauty; and she glides
Into his darker musings with a mild
And healing sympathy, that steals away
Their sharpness ere he is aware. When thoughts
Of the last bitter hour come like a blight
Over thy spirit, and sad images
Of the stern agony, and shroud, and pall,
And breathless darkness, and the narrow house,
Make thee to shudder, and grow sick at heart —
Go forth, under the open sky, and list
To nature's teachings, while from all around —
Earth and her waters, and the depths of air —
Comes a still voice: Yet a few days, and thee
The all-beholding sun shall see no more
In all his course; nor yet in the cold ground,

Where thy pale form was laid with many tears,
Nor in the embrace of ocean shall exist
Thy image. Earth, that nourished thee, shall claim
Thy growth to be resolved to earth again;
And, lost each human trace, surrendering up
Thine individual being, shalt thou go
To mix for ever with the elements —
To be a brother to the insensible rock,
And to the sluggish clod which the rude swain
Turns with his share, and treads upon. The oak
Shall send his roots abroad, and pierce thy mould.

Yet not to thine eternal resting-place
Shalt thou retire alone, nor couldst thou wish
Couch more magnificent. Thou shalt lie down
With patriarchs of the infant world — with kings,
The powerful of the earth — the wise, the good —
Fair forms, and hoary seers of ages past,
All in one mighty sepulchre. The hills
Rock-ribbed and ancient as the sun, — the vales
Stretching in pensive quietness between —
The venerable woods — rivers that move
In majesty, and the complaining brooks
That make the meadows green; and, poured round all,
Old ocean's gray and melancholy waste, —
Are but the solemn decorations all
Of the great tomb of man. The golden sun,
The planets, all the infinite host of heaven,
Are shining on the sad abodes of death,
Through the still lapse of ages. All that tread
The globe are but a handful to the tribes
That slumber in its bosom. — Take the wings

Of morning; traverse Barca's desert sands,
Or lose thyself in the continuous woods
Where rolls the Oregon, and hears no sound
Save his own dashings — yet — the dead are there;
And millions in those solitudes, since first
The flight of years began, have laid them down
In their last sleep — the dead reign there alone.
So shalt thou rest; and what if thou withdraw
In silence from the living, and no friend
Take note of thy departure? All that breathe
Will share thy destiny. The gay will laugh
When thou art gone, the solemn brood of care
Plod on, and each one as before will chase
His favorite phantom; yet all these shall leave
Their mirth and their employments, and shall come
And make their bed with thee. As the long train
Of ages glides away, the sons of men,
The youth in life's green spring, and he who goes
In the full strength of years — matron, and maid,
And the sweet babe, and the gray-headed man,—
Shall one by one be gathered to thy side
By those, who in their turn shall follow them.

So live, that when thy summons comes to join
The innumerable caravan which moves
To that mysterious realm where each shall take
His chamber in the silent halls of death,
Thou go not like the quarry-slave at night,
Scourged to his dungeon; but, sustained and soothed
By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams.

THOMAS HOOD

(1794–1845.)

THE SONG OF THE SHIRT.

WITH fingers weary and worn,
With eyelids heavy and red,
A woman sat, in unwomanly rags,
Plying her needle and thread —
Stitch! stitch! stitch!
In poverty, hunger, and dirt;
And still with a voice of dolorous pitch
She sang the "Song of the Shirt!"

"Work! work! work!
While the cock is crowing aloof!
And work — work — work,
Till the stars shine through the roof!
It's oh! to be a slave
Along with the barbarous Turk,
Where woman has never a soul to save,
If this is Christian work!

Work — work — work
Till the brain begins to swim!

Work — work — work
  Till the eyes are heavy and dim!
Seam, and gusset, and band,
  Band, and gusset, and seam —
Till over the buttons I fall asleep,
  And sew them on in a dream!

O men, with sisters dear!
  O men, with mothers and wives!
It is not linen you're wearing out,
  But human creatures' lives!
    Stitch — stitch — stitch,
  In poverty, hunger, and dirt —
Sewing at once, with a double thread,
  A shroud as well as a shirt!

But why do I talk of death —
  That phantom of grisly bone?
I hardly fear his terrible shape,
  It seems so like my own —
It seems so like my own
  Because of the fasts I keep;
O God! that bread should be so dear,
  And flesh and blood so cheap!

Work — work — work!
  My labor never flags;
And what are its wages? A bed of straw,
  A crust of bread — and rags,
That shattered roof — and this naked floor —
  A table — a broken chair —
And a wall so blank my shadow I thank
  For sometimes falling there!

Work — work — work!
From weary chime to chime!
Work — work — work —
As prisoners work for crime!
Band, and gusset, and seam,
Seam, and gusset, and band —
Till the heart is sick and the brain benumbed,
As well as the weary hand.

Work — work — work
In the dull December light!
And work — work — work,
When the weather is warm and bright! —
While underneath the eaves
The brooding swallows cling,
As if to show me their sunny backs,
And twit me with the Spring.

Oh! but to breathe the breath
Of the cowslip and primrose sweet —
With the sky above my head,
And the grass beneath my feet!
For only one short hour
To feel as I used to feel,
Before I knew the woes of want
And the walk that costs a meal!

Oh! but for one short hour —
A respite however brief!
No blessed leisure for love or hope,
But only time for grief!
A little weeping would ease my heart;

But in their briny bed
My tears must stop, for every drop
Hinders needle and thread!"

With fingers weary and worn,
With eyelids heavy and red,
A woman sat, in unwomanly rags,
Plying her needle and thread —
Stitch! stitch! stitch!
In poverty, hunger, and dirt;
And still, with a voice of dolorous pitch —
Would that its tone could reach the rich! —
She sang this "Song of the Shirt!"

TO A CHILD EMBRACING HIS MOTHER.

I.

LOVE thy mother, little one!
Kiss and clasp her neck again, —
Hereafter she may have a son
Will kiss and clasp her neck in vain.
Love thy mother, little one!

II.

Gaze upon her living eyes,
And mirror back her love for thee, —
Hereafter thou mayst shudder sighs
To meet them when they cannot see.
Gaze upon her living eyes!

III.

Press her lips the while they glow
With love that they have often told, —
Hereafter thou mayst press in woe,
And kiss them till thine own are cold.
Press her lips the while they glow!

IV.

Oh, revere her raven hair!
Although it be not silver-gray —
Too early Death, led on by Care,
May snatch save one dear lock away.
Oh, revere her raven hair!

V.

Pray for her at eve and morn,
That Heaven may long the stroke defer —
For thou mayst live the hour forlorn
When thou wilt ask to die with her.
Pray for her at eve and morn!

JOSEPH RODMAN DRAKE

(1795–1820.)

THE AMERICAN FLAG.

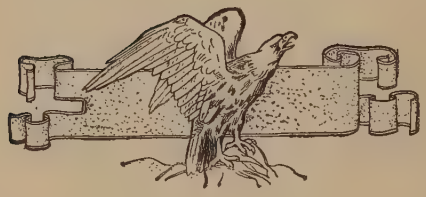
WHEN Freedom from her mountain height
Unfurled her standard to the air,
She tore the azure robe of night,
And set the stars of glory there.
She mingled with its gorgeous dyes
The milky baldric of the skies,
And striped its pure celestial white
With streakings of the morning light;
Then from his mansion in the sun
She called her eagle bearer down,
And gave into his mighty hand
The symbol of her chosen land.
Majestic monarch of the cloud,
Who rear'st aloft thy regal form,
To hear the tempest trumpings loud
And see the lightning lances driven,
When strive the warriors of the storm,
And rolls the thunder-drum of heaven,
Child of the sun! to thee 'tis given
To guard the banner of the free,
To hover in the sulphur smoke,
To ward away the battle stroke,

And bid its blendings shine afar,
Like rainbows on the cloud of war,
The harbingers of victory!

Flag of the brave! thy folds shall fly,
The sign of hope and triumph high,
When speaks the signal trumpet tone,
And the long line comes gleaming on.
Ere yet the life-blood, warm and wet,
Has dimmed the glistening bayonet,
Each soldier eye shall brightly turn
To where thy sky-born glories burn,
And, as his springing steps advance,
Catch war and vengeance from the glance.
And when the cannon-mouthings loud
Heave in wild wreaths the battle shroud,
And gory sabres rise and fall
Like shoots of flame on midnight's pall,
Then shall thy meteor glances glow,
And cowering foes shall shrink beneath
Each gallant arm that strikes below
That lovely messenger of death.

Flag of the seas! on ocean wave
Thy stars shall glitter o'er the brave;
When death, careering on the gale,
Sweeps darkly round the bellied sail,
And frighted waves rush wildly back
Before the broadside's reeling rack,
Each dying wanderer of the sea
Shall look at once to heaven and thee,
And smile to see thy splendors fly
In triumph o'er his closing eye.

Flag of the free heart's hope and home!
By angel hands to valor given;
Thy stars have lit the welkin dome,
And all thy hues were born in heaven.
Forever float that standard sheet!
Where breathes the foe but falls before us,
With Freedom's soil beneath our feet,
And Freedom's banner streaming o'er us!



JOHN KEATS

(1796–1821.)

THE EVE OF ST. AGNES.

ST. AGNES' EVE — Ah, bitter chill it was!
The owl, for all his feathers, was a-cold;
The hare limped trembling through the frozen grass,
And silent was the flock in woolly fold:
Numb were the beadsman's fingers while he told
His rosary, and while his frosted breath,
Like pious incense from a censer old,
Seemed taking flight for heaven without a death,
Past the sweet virgin's picture, while his prayer he saith.

His prayer he saith, this patient, holy man;
Then takes his lamp, and riseth from his knees,
And back returneth, meagre, barefoot, wan,
Along the chapel aisle by slow degrees;
The sculptured dead, on each side, seem to freeze,
Emprisoned in black, purgatorial rails;
Knights, ladies, praying in dumb orat'ries,

He passeth by; and his weak spirit fails
To think how they may ache in icy hoods and mails.

Northward he turneth through a little door,
And scarce three steps, ere music's golden tongue
Flattered to tears this aged man and poor;
But no — already had his death-bell rung;
The joys of all his life were said and sung;
His was harsh penance on St. Agnes' Eve;
Another way he went, and soon among
Rough ashes sat he for his soul's reprieve,
And all night kept awake, for sinners' sake to grieve.

That ancient beadsman heard the prelude soft;
And so it chanced, for many a door was wide,
From hurry to and fro. Soon, up aloft,
The silver, snarling trumpets 'gan to chide;
The level chambers, ready with their pride,
Were glowing to receive a thousand guests;
The carved angels, ever eager-eyed,
Stared, where upon their heads the cornice rests,
With hair blown back, and wings put crosswise on their breasts.

At length burst in the argent revelry,
With plume, tiara, and all rich array,
Numerous as shadows haunting fairily
The brain, new-stuffed, in youth, with triumphs gay
Of old romance. These let us wish away;
And turn, soul-thoughted, to one lady there,
Whose heart had brooded, all that wintry day,
On love, and winged St. Agnes' saintly care,
As she had heard old dames full many times declare.

They told her how, upon St. Agnes' Eve,
Young virgins might have visions of delight,
And soft adorings from their loves receive
Upon the honeyed middle of the night,
If ceremonies due they did aright;
As, supperless to bed they must retire,
And couch supine their beauties, lily white;
Nor look behind, nor sideways, but require
Of heaven with upward eyes for all that they desire.

Full of this whim was thoughtful Madeline;
The music, yearning like a god in pain,
She scarcely heard; her maiden eyes divine,
Fixed on the floor, saw many a sweeping train
Pass by — she heeded not at all; in vain
Came many a tiptoe, amorous cavalier,
And back retired; not cooled by high disdain,
But she saw not; her heart was otherwhere;
She sighed for Agnes' dreams, the sweetest of the year.

She danced along with vague, regardless eyes,
Anxious her lips, her breathing quick and short;
The hallowed hour was near at hand; she sighs
Amid the timbrels, and the thronged resort
Of whisperers in anger, or in sport;
'Mid looks of love, defiance, hate, and scorn,
Hoodwinked with fairy fancy; all amort
Save to St. Agnes and her lambs unshorn,
And all the bliss to be before to-morrow morn.

So, purposing each moment to retire,
She lingered still. Meantime, across the moors,
Had come young Porphyro, with heart on fire

For Madeline. Beside the portal doors,
Buttressed from moonlight, stands he, and implores
All saints to give him sight of Madeline,
But for one moment in the tedious hours,
That he might gaze and worship all unseen;
Perchance speak, kneel, touch, kiss — in sooth such
things have been.

He ventures in; let no buzzed whisper tell;
All eyes be muffled, or a hundred swords
Will storm his heart, love's feverous citadel;
For him, those chambers held barbarian hordes,
Hyena foemen, and hot-blooded lords,
Whose very dogs would execrations howl
Against his lineage; not one breast affords
Him any mercy, in that mansion foul,
Save one old beldame, weak in body and in soul.

Ah, happy chance! the aged creature came,
Shuffling along with ivory-headed wand,
To where he stood, hid from the torch's flame,
Behind a broad hall-pillar, far beyond
The sound of merriment and chorus bland.
He startled her; but soon she knew his face,
And grasped his fingers in her palsied hand,
Saying, "Mercy, Porphyro! hie thee from this place;
They are all here to-night, the whole blood-thirsty race!

Get hence! get hence! there's dwarfish Hildebrand;
He had a fever late, and in the fit
He cursed thee and thine, both house and land;
Then there's that old Lord Maurice, not a whit
More tame for his gray hairs — Alas me! flit!

Flit like a ghost away!" — "Ah, gossip dear,
We're safe enough; here in this arm-chair sit,
And tell me how" — "Good saints, not here, not here;
Follow me, child, or else these stones will be thy bier."

He followed through a lowly arched way,
Brushing the cobwebs with his lofty plume;
And as she muttered "Well-a — well-a-day!"
He found him in a little moonlight room,
Pale, latticed, chill, and silent as a tomb.
"Now tell me where is Madeline," said he,
"Oh tell me, Angela, by the holy loom
Which none but secret sisterhood may see,
When they St. Agnes' wool are weaving piously."

"St. Agnes! Ah! it is St. Agnes' Eve —
Yet men will murder upon holy days;
Thou must hold water in a witch's sieve,
And be liege-lord of all the elves and fays,
To venture so. It fills me with amaze
To see thee, Porphyro! — St. Agnes' Eve!
God's help! my lady fair the conjurer plays
This very night; good angels her deceive!
But let me laugh awhile, I've mickle time to grieve."

Feebly she laugheth in the languid moon,
While Porphyro upon her face doth look,
Like puzzled urchin on an aged crone
Who keepeth closed a wondrous riddle-book,
As spectacled she sits in chimney nook.
But soon his eyes grew brilliant, when she told
His lady's purpose; and he scarce could brook

Tears, at the thought of those enchantments cold,
And Madeline asleep in lap of legends old.

Sudden a thought came like a full-blown rose,
Flushing his brow, and in his pained heart
Made purple riot; then doth he propose
A stratagem, that makes the beldame start:
"A cruel man and impious thou art!
Sweet lady, let her pray, and sleep and dream
Alone with her good angels, far apart
From wicked men like thee. Go, go! I deem
Thou canst not surely be the same that thou didst seem."

"I will not harm her, by all saints I swear!"
Quoth Porphyro; "Oh may I ne'er find grace
When my weak voice shall whisper its last prayer,
If one of her soft ringlets I displace,
Or look with ruffian passion in her face;
Good Angela, believe me by these tears;
Or I will, even in a moment's space,
Awake, with horrid shout, my foemen's ears,
And beard them, though they be more fanged than wolves and bears."

"Ah! why wilt thou affright a feeble soul?
A poor, weak, palsy-stricken, church-yard thing,
Whose passing-bell may ere the midnight toll;
Whose prayers for thee, each morn and evening,
Were never missed." Thus plaining, doth she bring
A gentler speech from burning Porphyro;
So woful, and of such deep sorrowing,

That Angela gives promise she will do
Whatever he shall wish, betide her weal or woe.

Which was, to lead him, in close secrecy,
Even to Madeline's chamber, and there hide
Him in a closet, of such privacy
That he might see her beauty unespied,
And win perhaps that night a peerless bride;
While legioned fairies paced the coverlet,
And pale enchantment held her sleepy-eyed.
Never on such a night have lovers met,
Since Merlin paid his demon all the monstrous debt.

"It shall be as thou wishest," said the dame;
"All cates and dainties shall be stored there
Quickly on this feast-night; by the tambour frame
Her own lute thou wilt see; no time to spare,
For I am slow and feeble, and scarce dare
On such a catering trust my dizzy head.
Wait here, my child, with patience kneel in prayer
The while. Ah! thou must needs the lady wed,
Or may I never leave my grave among the dead."

So saying she hobbled off with busy fear.
The lover's endless minutes slowly pass'd;
The dame return'd, and whisper'd in his ear
To follow her; with aged eyes aghast
From fright of dim espial. Safe at last,
Through many a dusky gallery, they gain
The maiden's chamber, silken, hush'd and chaste;
Where Porphyro took covert, pleased amain.
His poor guide hurried back with agues in her brain.

Her faltering hand upon the balustrade,
Old Angela was feeling for the stair,
When Madeline, St. Agnes' charmed maid,
Rose, like a missioned spirit, unaware;
With silver taper's light, and pious care,
She turned, and down the aged gossip led
To a safe level matting. Now prepare,
Young Porphyro, for gazing on that bed!
She comes, she comes again, like ring-dove frayed and fled.

Out went the taper as she hurried in;
Its little smoke, in pallid moonshine, died;
She closed the door, she panted, all akin
To spirits of the air, and visions wide;
No uttered syllable, or, woe betide!
But to her heart, her heart was voluble,
Paining with eloquence her balmy side;
As though a tongueless nightingale should swell
Her throat in vain, and die, heart-stifled in her dell.

A casement high and triple-arched there was,
All garlanded with carven imageries
Of fruits, and flowers, and bunches of knot-grass,
And diamonded with panes of quaint device,
Innumerable of stains and splendid dyes,
As are the tiger-moth's deep-damasked wings;
And in the midst, 'mong thousand heraldries,
And twilight saints, and dim emblazonings,
A shielded scutcheon blushed with blood of queens and kings.

Full on this casement shone the wintry moon,
And threw warm gules on Madeline's fair breast,

As down she knelt for heaven's grace and boon;
Rose-bloom fell on her hands, together prest,
And on her silver cross soft amethyst,
And on her hair a glory, like a saint;
She seemed a splendid angel, newly drest,
Save wings, for heaven. Porphyro grew faint;
She knelt, so pure a thing, so free from mortal taint.

Anon his heart revives; her vespers done,
Of all its wreathed pearls her hair she frees;
Unclasps her warmed jewels one by one;
Loosens her fragrant bodice; by degrees
Her rich attire creeps rustling to her knees;
Half-hidden, like a mermaid in sea-weed,
Pensive awhile she dreams awake, and sees,
In fancy, fair St. Agnes in her bed,
But dares not look behind, or all the charm is fled.

Soon, trembling in her soft and chilly nest,
In sort of wakeful swoon, perplexed she lay,
Until the poppied warmth of sleep oppressed
Her soothed limbs, and soul fatigued away;
Flown like a thought, until the morrow-day;
Blissfully havened both from joy and pain;
Clasp like a missal where swart Paynims pray;
Blinded alike from sunshine and from rain,
As though a rose should shut, and be a bud again.

Stolen to this paradise, and so entranced,
Porphyro gazed upon her empty dress,
And listened to her breathing, if it chanced
To wake into a slumberous tenderness;

Which when he heard, that minute did he bless,
And breathed himself; then from the closet crept,
Noiseless as fear in a wide wilderness,
And over the hushed carpet, silent, stept,
And 'tween the curtains peeped, where, lo! — how fast
she slept.

Then by the bed-side, where the faded moon
Made a dim, silver twilight, soft he set
A table, and, half anguished, threw thereon
A cloth of woven crimson, gold, and jet; —
Oh for some drowsy Morphean amulet!
The boisterous, midnight, festive clarion,
The kettle-drum, and far-heard clarionet,
Affray his ears, though but in dying tone: —
The hall-door shuts again, and all the noise is gone.

And still she slept an azure-lidded sleep,
In blanched linen, smooth, and lavendered;
While he from forth the closet brought a heap
Of candied apple, quince, and plum, and gourd;
With jellies soother than the creamy curd,
And lucent syrops, tinct with cinnamon;
Manna and dates, in argosy transferred
From Fez; and spiced dainties, every one,
From silken Samarcand to cedared Lebanon.

These delicates he heaped with glowing hand
On golden dishes and in baskets bright
Of wreathed silver. Sumptuous they stand
In the retired quiet of the night,
Filling the chilly room with perfume light. —

"And now, my love, my seraph fair, awake!
Thou art my heaven, and I thine eremite;
Open thine eyes, for meek St. Agnes' sake,
Or I shall drowse beside thee, so my soul doth ache."

Thus whispering, his warm, unnerved arm
Sank in her pillow. Shaded was her dream
By the dusk curtains; — 'twas a midnight charm
Impossible to melt as iced stream:
The lustrous salvers in the moonlight gleam;
Broad golden fringe upon the carpet lies;
It seemed he never, never could redeem
From such a steadfast spell his lady's eyes;
So mused awhile, entoiled in woofed phantasies.

Awakening up, he took her hollow lute, —
Tumultuous, — and, in chords that tenderest be,
He played an ancient ditty, long since mute,
In Provence called "La belle dame sans mercy;"
Close to her ear touching the melody; —
Wherewith disturbed, she uttered a soft moan;
He ceased — she panted quick — and suddenly
Her blue affrayed eyes wide open shone;
Upon his knees he sank, pale as smooth-sculptured stone

Her eyes were open, but she still beheld,
Now wide awake, the vision of her sleep.
There was a painful change, that nigh expelled
The blisses of her dream so pure and deep;
At which fair Madeline began to weep,
And moan forth witless words with many a sigh;
While still her gaze on Porphyro would keep;

Who knelt, with joined hands and piteous eye,
Fearing to move or speak, she looked so dreamingly.

"Ah, Porphyro!" said she, "but even now
Thy voice was at sweet tremble in mine ear,
Made tunable with every sweetest vow;
And those sad eyes were spiritual and clear;
How changed thou art! how pallid, chill, and drear!
Give me that voice again, my Porphyro,
Those looks immortal, those complainings dear!
Oh leave me not in this eternal woe,
For if thou diest, my love, I know not where to go."

Beyond a mortal man impassioned far
At these voluptuous accents, he arose,
Ethereal, flushed, and like a throbbing star
Seen 'mid the sapphire heaven's deep repose;
Into her dream he melted, as the rose
Blendeth its odor with the violet, —
Solution sweet; meantime the frost-wind blows
Like love's alarum pattering the sharp sleet
Against the window-panes; St. Agnes' moon hath set.

'Tis dark; quick pattereth the flaw-blown sleet;
"This is no dream, my bride, my Madeline!"
'Tis dark; the iced gusts still rave and beat:
"No dream, alas! alas! and woe is mine!
Porphyro will leave me here to fade and pine. —
Cruel! what traitor could thee hither bring?
I curse not, for my heart is lost in thine,
Though thou forsakest a deceived thing; —
A dove forlorn and lost, with sick, unpruned wing."

"My Madeline! sweet dreamer! lovely bride!
Say, may I be for aye thy vassal blest?
Thy beauty's shield, heart-shaped and vermeil dyed?
Ah, silver shrine, here will I take my rest
After so many hours of toil and quest,
A famished pilgrim, — saved by miracle.
Though I have found, I will not rob thy nest,
Saving of thy sweet self; if thou think'st well
To trust, fair Madeline, to no rude infidel.

Hark! 'tis an elfin storm from fairy land,
Of haggard seeming, but a boon indeed:
Arise — arise! the morning is at hand; —
The bloated wassailers will never heed.
Let us away, my love, with happy speed;
There are no ears to hear, or eyes to see, —
Drowned all in Rhenish and the sleepy mead.
Awake! arise! my love, and fearless be,
For o'er the southern moors I have a home for thee."

She hurried at his words, beset with fears,
For there were sleeping dragons all around,
At glaring watch, perhaps, with ready spears —
Down the wide stairs a darkling way they found,
In all the house was heard no human sound.
A chain-drooped lamp was flickering by each door;
The arras, rich with horseman, hawk, and hound,
Fluttered in the besieging wind's uproar;
And the long carpets rose along the gusty floor.

They glide, like phantoms, into the wide hall!
Like phantoms to the iron porch they glide,

Where lay the porter, in uneasy sprawl,
With a huge empty flagon by his side;
The wakeful bloodhound rose, and shook his hide.
But his sagacious eye an inmate owns;
By one, and one, the bolts full easy slide;
The chains lie silent on the footworn stones;
The key turns, and the door upon its hinges groans.

And they are gone! ay, ages long ago
These lovers fled away into the storm.
That night the baron dreamt of many a woe,
And all his warrior-guests, with shade and form
Of witch, and demon, and large coffin-worm,
Were long be-nightmared. Angela the old
Died palsy-twitched, with meagre face deform;
The beadsman, after thousand aves told,
For aye unsought-for slept among his ashes cold.

ODE ON A GRECIAN URN.

1.

THOU still unravish'd bride of quietness!
Thou foster-child of Silence and slow Time,
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:

"Down the Wide Stairs a Darkling Way They Found,
In All the House Was Heard No Human Sound."

What leaf-fringed legend haunts about thy shape
Of deities or mortals, or of both,
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?
What men or gods are these? What maidens loath?
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

2.

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd,
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:
Fair youth beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
Though winning near the goal — yet, do not grieve;
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

3.

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed
Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;
And happy melodist, unwearied,
For ever piping songs for ever new;
More happy love! more happy, happy love!
For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd,
For ever panting and for ever young;
All breathing human passion far above,
That leaves a heart high sorrowful and cloy'd,
A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

4.

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?
To what green altar, O mysterious priest,

Lead'st thou that heifer, lowing at the skies,
And all her silken flanks with garlands drest?
What little town by river or sea-shore,
Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
Is emptied of its folk, this pious morn?
And, little town, thy streets for evermore
Will silent be; and not a soul to tell
Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

5.

O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede
Of marble men and maidens over-wrought,
With forest branches and the trodden weed;
Thou, silent form! dost tease us out of thought
As doth eternity. Cold Pastoral!
When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st
"Beauty is truth, truth beauty," — that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE.

1.

MY heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:

'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
But being too happy in thy happiness, —
That thou, light-wingéd Dryad of the trees,
In some melodious plot
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

2.

O for a draught of vintage, that hath been
Cool'd a long age in the deep delvéd earth,
Tasting of Flora and the country green,
Dance and Provençal song, and sun-burnt mirth!
O for a beaker full of the warm South,
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,
With beaded bubbles winking at the brim
And purple-stainéd mouth;
That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
And with thee fade away into the forest dim:

3.

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
What thou among the leaves hast never known,
The weariness, the fever, and the fret
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,
Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
And leaden-eyed despairs;
Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow.

4.

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,
Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,

But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:
Already with thee! tender is the night,
And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,
Cluster'd around by all her starry Fays.
But here there is no light
Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown
Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.

5.

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,
But, in embalméd darkness, guess each sweet
Wherewith the seasonable month endows
The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;
White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;
Fast-fading violets cover'd up in leaves;
And mid-May's eldest child,
The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,
The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.

6.

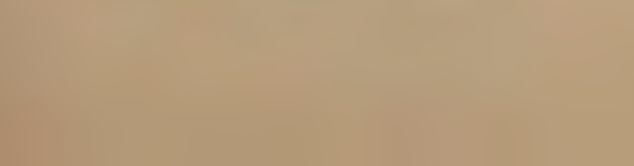
Darkling I listen; and for many a time
I have been half in love with easeful Death,
Call'd him soft names in many a muséd rhyme,
To take into the air my quiet breath;
Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
In such an ecstasy!
Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain —
To thy high requiem become a sod.

7.

Thou wast not born for death, immortal bird!
No hungry generations tread thee down;
The voice I hear this passing night was heard
In ancient days by emperor and clown:
Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
She stood in tears amid the alien corn;
The same that oft-times hath
Charmed magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faëry lands forlorn.

8.

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell
To toll me back from thee to my sole self!
Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well
As she is famed to do, deceiving elf.
Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades
Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
Up the hillside; and now 'tis buried deep
In the next valley glades:
Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
Fled is that music!—Do I wake or sleep?



ON FIRST LOOKING INTO CHAPMAN'S HOMER.

MUCH have I travell'd in the realms of gold
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;
Round many western islands have I been
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.
Oft of one wide expanse had I been told
That deep-brow'd Homer ruled as his demesne:
Yet did I never breathe its pure serene
Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold:
— Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken;
Or like stout Cortez — when with eagle eyes
He stared at the Pacific, and all his men
Look'd at each other with a wild surmise —
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN

(1801–1890.)

THE PILLAR OF THE CLOUD.

LEAD, Kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom,
Lead Thou me on!
The night is dark, and I am far from home—
Lead Thou me on!
Keep Thou my feet; I do not ask to see
The distant scene,—one step enough for me.

I was not ever thus, nor pray'd that Thou
Shouldst lead me on.
I lov'd to choose and see my path; but now
Lead Thou me on!
I lov'd the garish day, and, spite of fears,
Pride rul'd my will: remember not past years.

So long Thy power hath bless'd me, sure it still
Will lead me on,
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till
The night is gone;
And with the morn those angel faces smile
Which I have lov'd long since, and lost awhile.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

(1803–1882.)

EACH AND ALL.

LITTLE thinks, in the field, yon red-cloaked clown
Of thee from the hill-top looking down;
The heifer that lows in the upland farm,
Far-heard, lows not thine ear to charm;
The sexton, tolling his bell at noon,
Deems not that great Napoleon
Stops his horse, and lists with delight,
Whilst his files sweep round yon Alpine height;
Nor knowest thou what argument
Thy life to thy neighbor's creed has lent.
All are needed by each one —
Nothing is fair or good alone.
I thought the sparrow's note from heaven,
Singing at dawn on the alder bough;
I brought him home, in his nest, at even.
He sings the song, but it pleases not now;
For I did not bring home the river and sky:
He sang to my ear — they sang to my eye.

The delicate shells lay on the shore;
The bubbles of the latest wave
Fresh pearls to their enamel gave,
And the bellowing of the savage sea
Greeted their safe escape to me.
I wiped away the weeds and foam —
I fetched my sea-born treasures home;
But the poor, unsightly, noisome things
Had left their beauty on the shore,
With the sun, and the sand, and the wild uproar.

The lover watched his graceful maid,
As 'mid the virgin train she strayed;
Nor knew her beauty's best attire
Was woven still by the snow-white choir.
At last she came to his hermitage,
Like the bird from the woodlands to the cage;
The gay enchantment was undone —
A gentle wife, but fairy none.

Then I said, "I covet truth;
Beauty is unripe childhood's cheat —
I leave it behind with the games of youth."
As I spoke, beneath my feet
The ground-pine curled its pretty wreath,
Running over the club-moss burrs;
I inhaled the violet's breath;
Around me stood the oaks and firs;
Pine-cones and acorns lay on the ground;
Over me soared the eternal sky,
Full of light and of deity;

Again I saw, again I heard,
The rolling river, the morning bird;
Beauty through my senses stole —
I yielded myself to the perfect whole.

DAYS.

DAUGHTERS of Time, the hypocritic Days,
Muffled and dumb like barefoot dervishes,
And marching single in an endless file,
Bring diadems and fagots in their hands.
To each they offer gifts after his will,
Bread, kingdoms, stars and sky that holds them all.
I, in my pleached garden, watched the pomp,
Forgot my morning wishes, hastily
Took a few herbs and apples, and the Day
Turned and departed silent. I, too late,
Under her solemn fillet saw the scorn.

THE SKELETON IN ARMOR

(H. W. LONGFELLOW, 1807–1882.)

"SPEAK! speak! thou fearful
guest!
Who, with thy hollow breast
Still in rude armor drest,
Comest to daunt me!
Wrapt not in Eastern balms,
But with thy fleshless palms
Stretched, as if asking alms,
Why dost thou haunt me?"

Then from those cavernous eyes
Pale flashes seemed to rise,
As when the Northern skies
Gleam in December;
And, like the water's flow
Under December's snow,
Came a dull voice of woe
From the heart's chamber.

"I was a Viking old!
My deeds, though manifold,
No Skald in song has told,
No Saga taught thee!
Take heed that in thy verse
Thou dost the tale rehearse,
Else dread a dead man's curse;
For this I sought thee.

Far in the Northern Land,
By the wild Baltic's strand,
I, with my childish hand,
Tamed the gerfalcon;
And, with my skates fast-bound,
Skimmed the half-frozen Sound,
That the poor whimpering hound
Trembled to walk on.

Oft to his frozen lair
Tracked I the grisly bear,
While from my path the hare
Fled like a shadow;
Oft through the forest dark
Followed the were-wolf's bark,
Until the soaring lark
Sang from the meadow.

But when I older grew,
Joining a corsair's crew,
O'er the dark sea I flew
With the marauders.
Wild was the life we led;

Many the souls that sped,
Many the hearts that bled,
By our stern orders.

Many a wassail-bout
Wore the long Winter out;
Often our midnight shout
Set the cocks crowing,
As we the Berserk's tale
Measured in cups of ale,
Draining the oaken pail
Filled to o'erflowing.

Once as I told in glee
Tales of the stormy sea,
Soft eyes did gaze on me,
Burning yet tender;
And as the white stars shine
On the dark Norway pine,
On that dark heart of mine
Fell their soft splendor.

I wooed the blue-eyed maid,
Yielding, yet half afraid,
And in the forest's shade
Our vows were plighted.
Under its loosened vest
Fluttered her little breast,
Like birds within their nest
By the hawk frighted.

Bright in her father's hall
Shields gleamed upon the wall,

Loud sang the minstrels all,
Chanting his glory;
When of old Hildebrand
I asked his daughter's hand,
Mute did the minstrels stand
To hear my story.

While the brown ale he quaffed,
Loud then the champion laughed,
And as the wind-gusts waft
The sea-foam brightly,
So the loud laugh of scorn,
Out of those lips unshorn,
From the deep drinking-horn
Blew the foam lightly.

She was a Prince's child,
I but a Viking wild,
And though she blushed and smiled,
I was discarded!
Should not the dove so white
Follow the sea-mew's flight?
Why did they leave that night
Her nest unguarded?

Scarce had I put to sea,
Bearing the maid with me,—
Fairest of all was she
Among the Norsemen!—
When on the white sea-strand,
Waving his armèd hand,
Saw we old Hildebrand
With twenty horsemen.

Then launched they to the blast,
Bent like a reed each mast,
Yet we were gaining fast,
When the wind failed us;
And with a sudden flaw
Came round the gusty Skaw,
So that our foe we saw
Laugh as he hailed us.

And as to catch the gale
Round veered the flapping sail,
'Death!' was the helmsman's hail,
'Death without quarter!'
Midships with iron keel
Struck we her ribs of steel;
Down her black hulk did reel
Through the black water!

As with his wings aslant,
Sails the fierce cormorant,
Seeking some rocky haunt,
With his prey laden,
So toward the open main,
Beating to sea again,
Through the wild hurricane,
Bore I the maiden.

Three weeks we westward bore,
And when the storm was o'er,
Cloud-like we saw the shore
Stretching to leeward;
There for my lady's bower

Built I the lofty tower,
Which, to this very hour,
Stands looking seaward.

There lived we many years;
Time dried the maiden's tears;
She had forgot her fears,
She was a mother;
Death closed her mild blue eyes;
Under that tower she lies;
Ne'er shall the sun arise
On such another.

Still grew my bosom then,
Still as a stagnant fen!
Hateful to me were men,
The sunlight hateful!
In the vast forest here,
Clad in my warlike gear,
Fell I upon my spear,
Oh, death was grateful!

Thus, seamed with many scars,
Bursting these prison bars,
Up to its native stars
My soul ascended!
There from the flowing bowl
Deep drinks the warrior's soul.
Skoal! to the Northland! *skoal!*"
Thus the tale ended.

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

(1807–1892.)

TELLING THE BEES.

HERE is the place; right over the hill
Runs the path I took;
You can see the gap in the old wall still,
And the stepping-stones in the shallow brook.

There is the house, with the gate red-barred,
And the poplars tall;
And the barn's brown length, and the cattle-yard,
And the white horns tossing above the wall.

There are the beehives ranged in the sun;
And down by the brink;
Of the brook are her poor flowers, weed-o'errun,
Pansy and daffodill, rose and pink.

A year has gone, as the tortoise goes,
Heavy and slow;
And the same rose blows, and the same sun glows,
And the same brook sings of a year ago.

There's the same sweet clover smell in the breeze,
And the June sun warm
Tangles his wings of fire in the trees,
Setting, as then, over Fernside farm.

I mind me how with a lover's care
From my Sunday coat
I brushed off the burrs, and smoothed my hair,
And cooled at the brookside my brow and throat.

Since we parted, a month had passed, —
To love, a year;
Down through the beeches I looked at last
On the little red gate and the well-sweep near.

I can see it all now, — the slantwise rain
Of light through the leaves,
The sundown's blaze on her window pane,
The bloom of her roses under the eaves.

Just the same as a month before, —
The house and the trees,
The barn's brown gable, the vine by the door,—
Nothing changed but the hives of bees.

Before them, under the garden wall,
Forward and back,
Went drearily singing the chore-girl small,
Draping each hive with a shred of black.

Trembling, I listened; the summer sun
Had the chill of snow;
For I knew she was telling the bees of one
Gone the journey we all must go!

Then I said to myself, "My Mary weeps
For the dead today:
Haply her blind old grandsire sleeps
The fret and the pain of his age away."

But her dog whined low; on the door-way sill,
With his cane to his chin,
The old man sat; and the chore-girl still
Sung to the bees stealing out and in.

And the song she was singing ever since
In my ear sounds on:—
"Stay at home, pretty bees, fly not hence!
Mistress Mary is dead and gone!"

THE VANISHERS.

SWEETEST of all childlike dreams
In the simple Indian lore
Still to me the legend seems
Of the shapes who flit before.

Flitting, passing, seen and gone,
Never reached nor found at rest,
Baffling search, but beckoning on
To the Sunset of the Blest.

From the clefts of mountain rocks,
Through the dark of lowland firs,
Flash the eyes and flow the locks
Of the mystic Vanishers!

And the fisher in his skiff,
And the hunter on the moss,
Hear their call from cape and cliff,
See their hands the birch-leaves toss.

Wistful, longing, through the green
Twilight of the clustered pines,
In their faces rarely seen
Beauty more than mortal shines.

Fringed with gold their mantles flow
On the slopes of westering knolls;
In the wind they whisper low
Of the Sunset Land of Souls.

Doubt who may, O friend of mine!
Thou and I have seen them too;
On before with beck and sign
Still they glide, and we pursue.

More than clouds of purple trail
In the gold of setting day;
More than gleams of wing or sail
Beckon from the sea-mist gray.

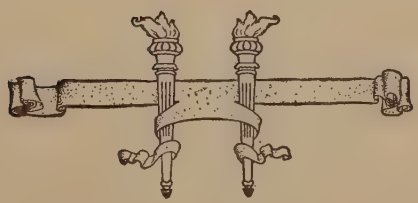
Glimpses of immortal youth,
Gleams and glories seen and flown,
Far-heard voices sweet with truth,
Airs from viewless Edens blown;

Beauty that eludes our grasp,
  Sweetness that transcends our taste,
Loving hands we may not clasp,
  Shining feet that mock our haste;

Gentle eyes we closed below,
  Tender voices heard once more,
Smile and call us, as they go
  On and onward, still before.

Guided thus, O friend of mine!
  Let us walk our little way,
Knowing by each beckoning sign
  That we are not quite astray.

Chase we still, with baffled feet,
  Smiling eye and waving hand,
Sought and seeker soon shall meet,
  Lost and found, in Sunset Land!



ALFRED LORD TENNYSON

(1809–1892.)

MORTE D'ARTHUR.

(From Idylls of the King.)

SO all day long the noise of battle roll'd
Among the mountains by the winter sea,
Until King Arthur's Table, man by man,
Had fall'n in Lyonnesse about their lord,
King Arthur. Then, because his wound was deep,
The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,
And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,
A broken chancel with a broken cross,
That stood on a dark strait of barren land:
On one side lay the Ocean, and on one
Lay a great water, and the moon was full.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
"The sequel of to-day unsolders all
The goodliest fellowship of famous knights
Whereof this world holds record. Such a sleep
They sleep — the men I loved. I think that we
Shall never more, at any future time,
Delight our souls with talk of knightly deeds,
Walking about the gardens and the halls
Of Camelot, as in the days that were.
I perish by this people which I made, —
Tho' Merlin sware that I should come again
To rule once more; but, let what will be, be,
I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm
That without help I cannot last till morn.
Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,
Which was my pride: for thou rememberest how
In those old days, one summer noon, an arm
Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
Holding the sword — and how I row'd across
And took it, and have worn it, like a king;
And, wheresoever I am sung or told
In aftertime, this also shall be known:
But now delay not: take Excalibur,
And fling him far into the middle mere:
Watch that thou seest and lightly bring me word."
To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere:
"It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus,
Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the helm —
A little thing may harm a wounded man;
Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,
Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee word."

So saying, from the ruin'd shrine he stept,
And in the moon athwart the place of tombs,
Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men,
Old knights, and over them the sea-wind sang
Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He, stepping down
By zigzag paths, and juts of pointed rock,
Came on the shining levels of the lake.
There drew he forth the brand Excalibur,
And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,
Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran forth
And sparkled keen with frost against the hilt:
For all the haft twinkled with diamond sparks,
Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work
Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so long
That both his eyes were dazzled, as he stood,
This way and that dividing the swift mind,
In act to throw: but at the last it seem'd
Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd
There in the many-knotted water flags,
That whistled stiff and dry about the marge.
So strode he back slow to the wounded King.
Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
"Hast thou perform'd my mission which I gave?
What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?"
And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,
And the wild water lapping on the crag."
To whom replied King Arthur, faint and pale:
"Thou hast betray'd thy nature and thy name
Not rendering true answer, as beseem'd
Thy fëalty, nor like a noble knight:
For surer sign had follow'd, either hand,

Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.
This is a shameful thing for men to lie.
Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again,
As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing
I bade thee, watch, and lightly bring me word."
Then went Sir Bedivere the second time
Across the ridge, and paced beside the mere,
Counting the dewy pebbles, fix'd in thought;
But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,
How curiously and strangely chased, he smote
His palms together, and he cried aloud:
"And if indeed I cast the brand away,
Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,
Should thus be lost forever from the earth,
Which might have pleased the eyes of many men.
What good should follow this, if this were done?
What harm, undone? Deep harm to disobey,
Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.
Were it well to obey then, if a king demand
An act unprofitable, against himself?
The King is sick, and knows not what he does.
What record, or what relic of my lord
Should be to aftertime, but empty breath
And rumors of a doubt? but were this kept,
Stored in some treasure-house of mighty kings,
Some one might show it at a joust of arms,
Saying, 'King Arthur's sword, Excalibur,
Wrought by the lonely maiden of the Lake.
Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps
Upon the hidden bases of the hills.'
So might some old man speak in the aftertime
To all the people, winning reverence.

But now much honor and much fame were lost."
So spake he, clouded with his own conceit,
And hid Excalibur the second time,
And so strode back slow to the wounded King.
Then spoke King Arthur, breathing heavily:
"What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?"
And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"I heard the water lapping on the crag,
And the long ripple washing in the reeds."
To whom replied King Arthur, much in wrath:
"Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,
Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is me!
Authority forgets a dying king,
Laid widow'd of the power in his eye
That bow'd the will. I see thee what thou art,
For thou, the latest-left of all my knights,
In whom should meet the offices of all,
Thou wouldst betray me for the precious hilt;
Either from lust of gold, or like a girl
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.
Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,
And the third time may prosper, get thee hence:
But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,
I will arise and slay thee with my hands."
Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,
And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged
Among the bulrush beds, and clutch'd the sword,
And strongly wheel'd and threw it. The great brand
Made lightnings in the splendor of the moon,
And flashing round and round, and whirl'd in an arch,
Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,
Seen where the moving isles of winter shock

By night with noises of the Northern Sea.
So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur:
But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
And caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere.
And lightly went the other to the King.
Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker breath:
"Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.
Speak out: what is it thou hast heard, or seen?"
And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems
Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,
Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,
Not tho' I live three lives of mortal men,
So great a miracle as yonder hilt.
Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling him;
But when I look'd again, behold an arm,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
That caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere."
And answer made King Arthur, breathing hard:
"My end draws nigh; 'tis time that I were gone.
Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight,
And bear me to the margin; yet I fear
My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die."
So saying, from the pavement he half rose,
Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,
And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes
As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere
Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,
And would have spoken, but he found not words;

Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,
O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,
And rising bore him thro' the place of tombs.
But, as he walk'd, King Arthur panted hard,
Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed
When all the house is mute. So sigh'd the King,
Muttering and murmuring at his ear, "Quick, quick!
I fear it is too late, and I shall die."
But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge,
Clothed with his breath, and looking, as he walk'd,
Larger than human on the frozen hills.
He heard the deep behind him, and a cry
Before. His own thought drove him like a goad.
Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves
And barren chasms, and all to left and right
The bare black cliff clang'd round him, as he based
His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang
Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed heels —
And on a sudden, lo! the level lake,
And the long glories of the winter moon.
Then saw they how there hove a dusky barge,
Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,
Beneath them; and descending they were ware
That all the decks were dense with stately forms,
Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream — by these
Three Queens with crowns of gold: and from them rose
A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars,
And, as it were one voice, an agony
Of lamentation, like a wind that shrills
All night in a waste land, where no one comes,
Or hath come, since the making of the world.
Then murmur'd Arthur, "Place me in the barge."

So to the barge they came. There those three Queens
Put forth their hands, and took the King, and wept.
But she, that rose the tallest of them all
And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,
And loosed the shatter'd casque, and chafed his hands,
And call'd him by his name, complaining loud,
And dropping bitter tears against a brow
Striped with dark blood: for all his face was white
And colorless, and like the wither'd moon
Smote by the fresh beam of the springing east;
And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd with drops
Of onset; and the light and lustrous curls —
That made his forehead like a rising sun
High from the daïs-throne — were parch'd with dust;
Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,
Mix'd with the knightly growth that fringed his lips.
So, like a shatter'd column lay the King;
Not like that Arthur who, with lance in rest,
From spur to plume a star of tournament,
Shot thro' the lists of Camelot, and charged
Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.
Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere:
"Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go?
Where shall I hide my forehead and my eyes?
For now I see the true old times are dead,
When every morning brought a noble chance,
And every chance brought out a noble knight.
Such times have been not since the light that led
The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.
But now the whole Round Table is dissolved
Which was an image of the mighty world,
And I, the last, go forth companionless,

And the days darken round me, and the years,
Among new men, strange faces, other minds."
And slowly answered Arthur from the barge:
"The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfils himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.
Comfort thyself: what comfort is in me?
I have lived my life, and that which I have done
May He within himself make pure! but thou,
If thou shouldst never see my face again,
Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.
But now farewell. I am going a long way
With these thou seëst — if indeed I go
(For all my mind is clouded with a doubt)
To the island-valley of Avilion;
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies
Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard lawns
And bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea,
Where I will heal me of my grievous wound."
So said he, and the barge with oar and sail
Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted swan
That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood

With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere
Revolving many memories, till the hull
Look'd one black dot against the verge of dawn,
And on the mere the wailing died away.

SONG OF THE BROOK.

I COME from haunts of coot and hern:
I make a sudden sally
And sparkle out among the fern,
To bicker down a valley.

By thirty hills I hurry down,
Or slip between the ridges;
By twenty thorps, a little town,
And half a hundred bridges.

Till last by Philip's farm I flow
To join the brimming river;
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever,

I chatter over stony ways,
In little sharps and trebles;
I bubble into eddying bays,
I babble on the pebbles.

With many a curve my banks I fret
By many a field and fallow,
And many a fairy foreland set
With willow-weed and mallow.

I chatter, chatter, as I flow
To join the brimming river;
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

I wind about, and in and out,
With here a blossom sailing,
And here and there a lusty trout,
And here and there a grayling,

And here and there a foamy flake
Upon me, as I travel,
With many a silvery waterbreak
Above the golden gravel;

And draw them all along, and flow
To join the brimming river;
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

I steal by lawns and grassy plots;
I slide by hazel covers;
I move the sweet forget-me-nots
That grow for happy lovers.

"The Splendor Falls on Castle Walls
And Snowy Summits Old in Story."

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance,
Among my skimming swallows,
I make the netted sunbeam dance
Against my sandy shallows.

I murmur under moon and stars
In brambly wildernesses;
I linger by my shingly bars;
I loiter round my cresses;

And out again I curve and flow
To join the brimming river;
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

BUGLE SONG.

THE splendor falls on castle walls
And snowy summits old in story;
The long light shakes across the lakes,
And the wild cataract leaps in glory.
Blow, bugle, blow! set the wild echoes flying;
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes — dying, dying, dying!

Oh hark, oh hear! how thin and clear,
And thinner, clearer, farther going!
O sweet and far, from cliff and scar,
The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!

Blow! let us hear the purple glens replying;
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes — dying, dying, dying!

O love, they die in yon rich sky;
They faint on hill or field or river:
Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
And grow for ever and for ever.
Blow, bugle, blow! set the wild echoes flying,
And answer, echoes, answer — dying, dying, dying!

BREAK, BREAK, BREAK.

BREAK, break, break
On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy,
That he shouts with his sister at play!
O well for the sailor lad,
That he sings in his boat on the bay!

And the stately ships go on
To their haven under the hill;
But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still!

Break, break, break,
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!
But the tender grace of a day that is dead
Will never come back to me.

THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE AT BALAKLAVA.

HALF a league, half a league,
Half a league onward,
All in the valley of death,
Rode the six hundred.

Into the valley of death
Rode the six hundred;
For up came an order which
Some one had blundered.
"Forward, the light brigade!

Take the guns!" Nolan said:
Into the valley of death,
Rode the six hundred.

"Forward the light brigade!"
No man was there dismayed—
Not though the soldier knew
Some one had blundered:
Theirs not to make reply,
Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs but to do and die—
Into the valley of death,
Rode the six hundred.

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon in front of them,
Volleyed and thundered.
Stormed at with shot and shell,
Boldly they rode and well;
Into the jaws of death,
Into the mouth of hell,
Rode the six hundred.

Flashed all their sabres bare,
Flashed all at once in air,
Sabring the gunners there,
Charging an army, while
All the world wondered.
Plunged in the battery smoke,
With many a desperate stroke
The Russian line they broke;

Then they rode back, but not—
Not the six hundred.

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon behind them,
Volleyed and thundered.
Stormed at with shot and shell,
While horse and hero fell,
Those that had fought so well
Came from the jaws of death,
Back from the mouth of hell,
All that was left of them,
Left of six hundred.

When can their glory fade?
Oh the wild charge they made!
All the world wondered.
Honor the charge they made!
Honor the light brigade,
Noble six hundred!

THE DAISY

(Written at Edinburgh.)

O LOVE, what hours were thine and mine,
In lands of palm and southern pine;
In lands of palm, of orange-blossom,
Of olive, aloe, and maize and vine.

What Roman strength Turbia show'd
In ruin, by the mountain road;
  How like a gem, beneath, the city
Of little Monaco, basking, glow'd.

How richly down the rocky dell
The torrent vineyard streaming fell
  To meet the sun and sunny waters,
That only heav'd with a summer swell.

What slender campanili grew
By bays, the peacock's neck in hue;
  Where, here and there, on sandy beaches
A milky-bell'd amaryllis blew.

How young Columbus seem'd to rove,
Yet present in his natal grove,
  Now watching high on mountain cornice,
And steering, now, from a purple cove,

Now pacing mute by ocean's rim;
Till, in a narrow street and dim,
  I stay'd the wheels at Cogoletto,
And drank, and loyally drank to him.

Nor knew we well what pleas'd us most,
Not the clipp'd palm of which they boast;
  But distant color, happy hamlet,
A moulder'd citadel on the coast,

Or tower, or high hill-convent, seen
A light amid its olives green;
  Or olive-hoary cape in ocean;
Or rosy blossom in hot ravine,

Where oleanders flush'd the bed
Of silent torrents, gravel-spread;
And, crossing, oft we saw the glisten
Of ice, far up on a mountain head.

We lov'd that hall tho' white and cold,
Those niched shapes of noble mould,
A princely people's awful princes,
The grave, severe Genovese of old.

At Florence too what golden hours,
In those long galleries, were ours;
What drives about the fresh Cascinè,
Or walks in Boboli's ducal bowers.

In bright vignettes, and each complete,
Of tower or duomo, sunny-sweet,
Or palace, how the city glitter'd,
Thro' cypress avenues, at our feet.

But when we cross'd the Lombard plain
Remember what a plague of rain;
Of rain at Reggio, rain at Parma;
At Lodi, rain, Piacenza, rain.

And stern and sad (so rare the smiles
Of sunlight) look'd the Lombard piles;
Porch-pillars on the lion resting,
And sombre, old, colonnaded aisles.

O Milan, O the chanting quires,
The giant windows' blazon'd fires,
The height, the space, the gloom, the glory!
A mount of marble, a hundred spires!

I climb'd the roofs at break of day;
Sun-smitten Alps before me lay.
I stood among the silent statues,
And statued pinnacles, mute as they.

How faintly-flush'd, how phantom-fair,
Was Monte Rosa, hanging there
A thousand shadowy-pencill'd valleys
And snowy dells in a golden air.

Remember how we came at last
To Como; shower and storm and blast
Had blown the lake beyond his limit,
And all was flooded; and how we past

From Como, when the light was gray,
And in my head, for half the day,
The rich Virgilian rustic measure
Of Lari Maxume, all the way,

Like ballad-burthen music, kept,
As on The Lariano crept
To that fair port below the castle
Of Queen Theodolind, where we slept;

Or hardly slept, but watch'd awake
A cypress in the moonlight shake,
The moonlight touching o'er a terrace
One tall Agavè above the lake.

What more? we took our last adieu,
And up the snowy Splugen drew,
But ere we reach'd the highest summit
I pluck'd a daisy, I gave it you.

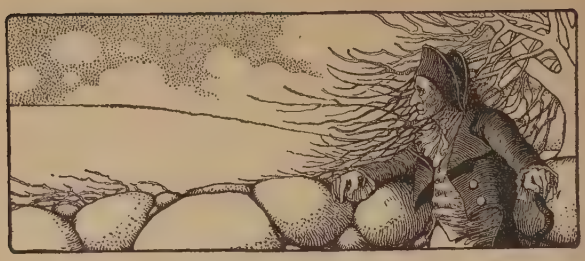
It told of England then to me,
And now it tells of Italy.
O love, we two shall go no longer
To lands of summer across the sea;

So dear a life your arms enfold
Whose crying is a cry for gold:
Yet here to-night in this dark city,
When ill and weary, alone and cold,

I found, tho' crush'd to hard and dry,
This nursling of another sky
Still in the little book you lent me,
And where you tenderly laid it by:

And I forgot the clouded Forth,
The gloom that saddens Heaven and Earth,
The bitter east, the misty summer
And gray metropolis of the North.

Perchance, to lull the throbs of pain,
Perchance, to charm a vacant brain,
Perchance, to dream you still beside me,
My fancy fled to the South again.



OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

(1809–1894.)

THE LAST LEAF.

I SAW him once before,
As he passed by the door,
And again
The pavement stones resound,
As he totters o'er the ground
With his cane.

They say that in his prime,
Ere the pruning-knife of Time
Cut him down,
Not a better man was found
By the Crier on his round
Through the town.

But now he walks the streets,
And he looks at all he meets
Sad and wan,
And he shakes his feeble head,
That it seems as if he said,
"They are gone."

The mossy marbles rest
On the lips that he has prest
In their bloom,
And the names he loved to hear
Have been carved for many a year
On the tomb.

My grandmamma has said —
Poor old lady, she is dead
Long ago —
That he had a Roman nose,
And his cheek was like a rose
In the snow;

But now his nose is thin,
And it rests upon his chin
Like a staff,
And a crook is in his back,
And a melancholy crack
In his laugh.

I know it is a sin
For me to sit and grin
At him here;
But the old three-cornered hat
And the breeches, and all that,
Are so queer!

And if I should live to be
The last leaf upon the tree
In the spring,
Let them smile, as I do now,
At the old forsaken bough
Where I cling.

THE CHAMBERED NAUTILUS.

THIS is the ship of pearl, which, poets feign,
Sails the unshadowed main, —
The venturous bark that flings
On the sweet summer wind its purpled wings
In gulfs enchanted, where the Siren sings,
And coral reefs lie bare,
Where the cold sea-maids rise to sun their streaming hair.

Its webs of living gauze no more unfurl;
Wrecked is the ship of pearl!
And every chambered cell,
Where its dim dreaming life was wont to dwell,
As the frail tenant shaped his growing shell,
Before thee lies revealed, —
Its irised ceiling rent, its sunless crypt unsealed!

Year after year beheld the silent toil
That spread his lustrous coil;
Still, as the spiral grew,
He left the past year's dwelling for the new,
Stole with soft step its shining archway through,
Built up its idle door,
Stretched in his last-found home, and knew the old no more.

Thanks for the heavenly message brought by thee,
Child of the wandering sea,
Cast from her lap, forlorn!
From thy dead lips a clearer note is born
Than ever Triton blew from wreathèd horn!
While on mine ear it rings,
Through the deep caves of thought I hear a voice that sings;—

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll!
Leave thy low-vaulted past!
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea!

EDGAR ALLAN POE

(1809–1849.)

TO HELEN.

HELEN, thy beauty is to me
Like those Nicæan barks of yore,
That gently, o'er a perfumed sea,
The weary, wayworn wanderer bore
To his own native shore.

On desperate seas long wont to roam,
Thy hyacinth hair, thy classic face,
Thy Naiad airs, have brought me home
To the glory that was Greece
And the grandeur that was Rome.

Lo! in yon brilliant window-niche
How statue-like I see thee stand,
The agate lamp within thy hand!
Ah, Psyche, from the regions which
Are Holy Land!

THE RAVEN.

ONCE upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore, —
While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,
As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door.
"'Tis some visitor," I muttered, "tapping at my chamber door:
Only this and nothing more."

Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak December,
And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon the floor.
Eagerly I wished the morrow; — vainly I had sought to borrow
From my books surcease of sorrow — sorrow for the lost Lenore,
For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore:
Nameless here for evermore.

And the silken sad uncertain rustling of each purple curtain
Thrilled me — filled me with fantastic terrors never felt before;
So that now, to still the beating of my heart, I stood repeating
"'Tis some visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door,
Some late visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door:
This it is and nothing more."

Presently my soul grew stronger; hesitating then no longer,
"Sir," said I, "or Madam, truly your forgiveness I implore;
But the fact is I was napping, and so gently you came rapping,
And so faintly you came tapping, tapping at my chamber door,
That I scarce was sure I heard you" — here I opened wide the door: —
Darkness there and nothing more.

Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there wondering, fearing,
Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortals ever dared to dream before;
But the silence was unbroken, and the stillness gave no token,
And the only word there spoken was the whispered word, "Lenore!"

This I whispered, and an echo murmured back the word, "Lenore:"
Merely this and nothing more.

Back into the chamber turning, all my soul within me burning,
Soon again I heard a tapping somewhat louder than before.
"Surely," said I, "surely that is something at my window lattice;
Let me see, then, what thereat is, and this mystery explore;
Let my heart be still a moment and this mystery explore:
'Tis the wind and nothing more."

Open here I flung the shutter, when, with many a flirt and flutter,
In there stepped a stately Raven of the saintly days of yore.
Not the least obeisance made he; not a minute stopped or stayed he;
But, with mien of lord or lady, perched above my chamber door,
Perched upon a bust of Pallas, just above my chamber door:
Perched, and sat, and nothing more.

Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into smiling
By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance it wore, —

"Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou," I said,
"art sure no craven,
Ghastly grim and ancient Raven wandering from the
Nightly shore:
Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night's Plu-
tonian shore!"
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

Much I marvelled this ungainly fowl to hear discourse
so plainly,
Though its answer little meaning — little relevancy
bore;
For we cannot help agreeing that no living human
being
Ever yet was blessed with seeing bird above his cham-
ber door,
Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his cham-
ber door,
With such name as "Nevermore."

But the Raven, sitting lonely on the placid bust, spoke
only
That one word, as if his soul in that one word he did
outpour.
Nothing further then he uttered, not a feather then he
fluttered,
Till I scarcely more than muttered, — "Other friends
have flown before;
On the morrow *he* will leave me, as my Hopes have
flown before."
Then the bird said, "Nevermore."

Startled at the stillness broken by reply so aptly
spoken,
"Doubtless," said I, "what it utters is its only stock
and store,
Caught from some unhappy master whom unmerciful
Disaster
Followed fast and followed faster till his songs one
burden bore:
Till the dirges of his Hope that melancholy burden
bore
Of 'Never — nevermore.'"

But the Raven still beguiling all my fancy into smiling,
Straight I wheeled a cushioned seat in front of bird and
bust and door;
Then, upon the velvet sinking, I betook myself to
linking
Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this ominous bird
of yore,
What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt, and ominous
bird of yore
Meant in croaking "Nevermore."

This I sat engaged in guessing, but no syllable ex-
pressing
To the fowl whose fiery eyes now burned into my
bosom's core;
This and more I sat divining, with my head at ease
reclining
On the cushion's velvet lining that the lamp-light
gloated o'er,

But whose velvet violet lining with the lamp-light gloating o'er
She shall press, ah, nevermore!

Then, methought, the air grew denser, perfumed from an unseen censer
Swung by seraphim whose foot-falls tinkled on the tufted floor.
"Wretch," I cried, "thy God hath lent thee — by these angels he hath sent thee
Respite — respite and nepenthe from thy memories of Lenore!
Quaff, oh quaff this kind nepenthe, and forget this lost Lenore!"
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

"Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil! prophet still, if bird or devil!
Whether Tempter sent, or whether tempest tossed thee here ashore,
Desolate yet all undaunted, on this desert land enchanted —
On this home by Horror haunted — tell me truly, I implore:
Is there — *is* there balm in Gilead? — tell me — tell me, I implore!"
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

"Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil — prophet still, if bird or devil!
By that Heaven that bends above us, by that God we both adore,

Tell this soul with sorrow laden if, within the distant
Aidenn,
It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels name
Lenore:
Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name
Lenore!"
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

"Be that word our sign of parting, bird or fiend!" I
shrieked, upstarting:
"Get thee back into the tempest and the Night's
Plutonian shore!
Leave no black plume as a token of that lie thy soul
hath spoken!
Leave my loneliness unbroken! quit the bust above my
door!
Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy form
from off my door!"
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still is
sitting
On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber
door;
And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon's that is
dreaming,
And the lamp-light o'er him streaming throws his
shadow on the floor:
And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on
the floor
Shall be lifted — nevermore!

THE BELLS.

HEAR the sledges with the bells —
Silver bells!
What a world of merriment their melody foretells!
How they tinkle, tinkle, tinkle,
In the icy air of night!
While the stars that oversprinkle
All the heavens, seem to twinkle
With a crystalline delight;
Keeping time, time, time,
In a sort of Runic rhyme,
To the tintinabulation that so musically swells
From the bells, bells, bells, bells,
Bells, bells, bells —
From the jingling and the tinkling of the bells.

Hear the mellow wedding bells,
Golden bells!
What a world of happiness their harmony foretells!
Through the balmy air of night
How they ring out their delight!
From the molten-golden notes,

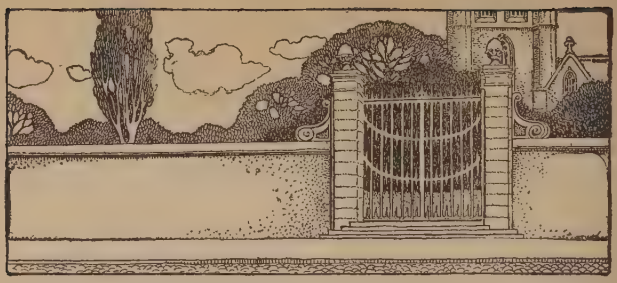
And all in tune,
What a liquid ditty floats
To the turtle-dove that listens, while she gloats
On the moon!
Oh, from out the sounding cells,
What a gush of euphony voluminously wells!
How it swells;
How it dwells
On the Future! how it tells
Of the rapture that impels
To the swinging and the ringing
Of the bells, bells, bells,
Of the bells, bells, bells, bells,
Bells, bells, bells,
To the rhyming and the chiming of the bells!

Hear the loud alarum bells —
Brazen bells!
What a tale of terror, now, their turbulency tells!
In the startled ear of night
How they scream out their affright!
Too much horified to speak,
They can only shriek, shriek,
Out of tune,
In a clamorous appealing to the mercy of the fire,
In a mad expostulation with the deaf and frantic fire
Leaping higher, higher, higher,
With a desperate desire,
And a resolute endeavor,
Now — now to sit, or never,
By the side of the pale-faced moon.
Oh, the bells, bells, bells!

What a tale their terror tells
Of Despair!
How they clang, and clash, and roar!
What a horror they outpour
On the bosom of the palpitating air!
Yet the ear it fully knows,
By the twanging,
And the clanging,
How the danger ebbs and flows;
Yet the ear distinctly tells,
In the jangling,
And the wrangling,
How the danger sinks and swells,
By the sinking or the swelling in the anger of the bells —
Of the bells —
Of the bells, bells, bells, bells,
Bells, bells, bells —
In the clamor and the clangor of the bells!
Hear the tolling of the bells —

Iron bells!
What a world of solemn thought their monody compels!
In the silence of the night,
How we shiver with affright
At the melancholy menace of their tone!
For every sound that floats
From the rust within their throats
Is a groan.
And the people — ah, the people —
They that dwell up in the steeple,
All alone,

And who tolling, tolling, tolling,
In that muffled monotone,
Feel a glory in so rolling
On the human heart a stone —
They are neither man nor woman —
They are neither brute nor human —
They are Ghouls :
And their king it is who tolls ;
And he rolls, rolls, rolls,
Rolls
A pæan from the bells !
And his merry bosom swells
With the pæan of the bells !
And he dances, and he yells ;
Keeping time, time, time,
In a sort of Runic rhyme,
To the pæan of the bells —
Of the bells :
Keeping time, time, time,
In a sort of Runic rhyme,
To the throbbing of the bells ; —
Of the bells, bells, bells, —
To the sobbing of the bells ;
Keeping time, time, time,
As he knells, knells, knells,
In a happy Runic rhyme,
To the rolling of the bells —
Of the bells, bells, bells —
To the tolling of the bells —
Of the bells, bells, bells, bells, —
Bells, bells, bells, —
To the moaning and the groaning of the bells.



WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

(1811–1863.)

AT THE CHURCH GATE.

ALTHOUGH I enter not,
Yet round about the spot
Ofttimes I hover;
And near the sacred gate,
With longing eyes I wait,
Expectant of her.

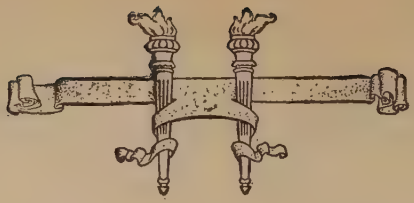
The minster bell tolls out
Above the city's rout,
And noise and humming;
They've hush'd the minster bell;
The organ 'gins to swell;
She's coming, she's coming!

My lady comes at last,
Timid and stepping fast
And hastening thither,

With modest eyes downcast;
She comes — she's here, she's past!
May heaven go with her!

Kneel undisturb'd, fair saint!
Pour out your praise or plaint
Meekly and duly;
I will not enter there,
To sully your pure prayer
With thoughts unruly.

But suffer me to pace
Round the forbidden place,
Lingering a minute,
Like outcast spirits, who wait,
And see, through heaven's gate,
Angels within it.



RUBÁIYÁT OF OMAR KHAYYÁM.

(Translated from the Persian by Edward Fitz Gerald.)

(1809–1883.)

I.

WAKE! For the Sun, who scatter'd into flight
The stars before him from the Field of Night,
Drives Night along with them from Heav'n, and strikes
The Sultán's Turret with a Shaft of Light.

II.

Before the phantom of False morning died,
Methought a Voice within the Tavern cried,
"When all the Temple is prepared within,
Why nods the drowsy Worshipper outside?"

III.

And, as the Cock crew, those who stood before
The Tavern shouted — "Open then the Door!
You know how little while we have to stay,
And, once departed, may return no more."

. . . . . .

V.

Iram indeed is gone with all his Rose,
And Jamshyd's Sev'n-ring'd Cup where no one knows;

But still a Ruby kindles in the Vine,
And many a Garden by the Water blows.

. . . . . .

VII.

Come, fill the Cup, and in the fire of Spring
Your Winter-garment of Repentance fling:
The Bird of Time has but a little way
To flutter — and the Bird is on the Wing.

VIII.

Whether at Naishápúr or Babylon,
Whether the Cup with sweet or bitter run,
The Wine of Life keeps oozing drop by drop,
The Leaves of Life keep falling one by one.

IX.

Each Morn a thousand Roses brings, you say;
Yes, but where leaves the Rose of Yesterday?
And this first Summer month that brings the Rose
Shall take Jamshyd and Kaikobád away.

. . . . . .

XII.

A Book of Verses underneath the Bough,
A Jug of Wine, a Loaf of Bread — and Thou
Beside me singing in the Wilderness —
Oh, Wilderness were Paradise enow!

XIII.

Some for the Glories of This World; and some
Sigh for the Prophet's Paradise to come;

Ah, take the Cash, and let the Credit go,
Nor heed the rumble of a distant Drum!

. . . . . .

XVI.

The Worldly Hope men set their Hearts upon
Turns Ashes — or it prospers; and anon,
Like Snow upon the Desert's dusty Face,
Lighting a little hour or two — is gone.

XVII.

Think, in this batter'd Caravanserai
Whose Portals are alternate Night and Day,
How Sultán after Sultán with his Pomp
Abode his destined Hour, and went his way.

XVIII.

They say the Lion and the Lizard keep
The Courts where Jamshyd gloried and drank deep:
And Bahrám, that great Hunter — the Wild Ass
Stamps o'er his Head, but cannot break his Sleep.

XIX.

I sometimes think that never blows so red
The Rose as where some buried Cæsar bled;
That every Hyacinth the Garden wears
Dropt in her Lap from some once lovely Head.

XX.

And this reviving Herb whose tender Green
Fledges the River-Lip on which we lean —

Ah, lean upon it lightly! for who knows
From what once lovely Lip it springs unseen!

. . . . . .

XXII.

For some we loved, the loveliest and the best
That from his Vintage rolling Time hath prest,
Have drunk their Cup a Round or two before,
And one by one crept silently to rest.

XXIII.

And we, that now make merry in the Room
They left, and Summer dresses in new bloom,
Ourselves must we beneath the Couch of Earth
Descend — ourselves to make a Couch — for whom?

XXIV.

Ah, make the most of what we yet may spend,
Before we too into the Dust descend;
Dust into Dust, and under Dust to lie,
Sans Wine, sans Song, sans Singer, and — sans End!

XXV.

Alike for those who for To-day prepare,
And those that after some To-morrow stare,
A Muezzín from the Tower of Darkness cries,
"Fools! your Reward is neither Here nor There."

XXVI.

Why, all the Saints and Sages who discuss'd
Of the Two Worlds so wisely — they are thrust
Like foolish Prophets forth; their Words to Scorn
Are scatter'd, and their Mouths are stopt with Dust.

XXVII.

Myself when young did eagerly frequent
Doctor and Saint, and heard great argument
About it and about: but evermore
Came out by the same door where in I went.

XXVIII.

With them the seed of Wisdom did I sow,
And with mine own hand wrought to make it grow;
And this was all the Harvest that I reap'd —
"I came like Water, and like Wind I go."

. . . . . .

XXXI.

Up from Earth's Centre through the Seventh Gate
I rose, and on the Throne of Saturn sate,
And many a Knot unravel'd by the Road;
But not the Master-knot of Human Fate.

XXXII.

There was the Door to which I found no Key;
There was the Veil through which I might not see:
Some little talk awhile of ME and THEE
There was — and then no more of THEE and ME.

XXXIII.

Earth could not answer; nor the Seas that mourn
In flowing Purple, of their Lord forlorn;
Nor rolling Heaven, with all his Signs reveal'd
And hidden by the sleeve of Night and Morn.

. . . . . .

XXXVII.

For I remember stopping by the way
To watch a Potter thumping his wet Clay:
And with its all-obliterated Tongue
It murmur'd — "Gently, Brother, gently, pray!"

. . . . . .

XLII.

And if the Wine you drink, the Lip you press,
End in what All begins and ends in — Yes;
Think then you are To-day what Yesterday
You were — To-morrow you shall not be less.

XLIII.

So when that Angel of the darker Drink
At last shall find you by the river-brink,
And, offering his Cup, invite your Soul
Forth to your Lips to quaff — you shall not shrink.

. . . . . .

XLV.

'Tis but a Tent where takes his one day's rest
A Sultán to the realm of Death addrest;
The Sultán rises, and the dark Ferrásh
Strikes, and prepares it for another guest.

XLVI.

And fear not lest Existence closing your
Account, and mine, should know the like no more;
The Eternal Sákí from that Bowl has pour'd
Millions of Bubbles like us, and will pour.

XLVII.

When You and I behind the Veil are past,
Oh, but the long, long while the World shall last,
Which of our Coming and Departure heeds
As the Sea's self should heed a pebble-cast.

XLVIII.

A Moment's Halt — a momentary taste.
Of BEING from the Well amid the Waste —
And Lo! — the phantom Caravan has reach'd
The NOTHING it set out from — Oh, make haste!

. . . . . .

LXIII.

O threats of Hell and Hopes of Paradise!
One thing at least is certain — *This* Life flies;
One thing is certain and the rest is Lies;
The Flower that once has blown for ever dies.

LXIV.

Strange, is it not? that of the myriads who
Before us pass'd the door of Darkness through,
Not one returns to tell us of the Road,
Which to discover we must travel too.

LXV.

The Revelations of Devout and Learn'd
Who rose before us, and as Prophets burn'd,
Are all but Stories, which, awoke from Sleep
They told their comrades, and to Sleep return'd.

XLVI.

I sent my Soul through the Invisible,
Some letter of that After-life to spell:
And by and by my Soul return'd to me,
And answer'd "I Myself am Heav'n and Hell:"

LXVII.

Heav'n but the Vision of fulfill'd Desire,
And Hell the Shadow from a Soul on fire,
Cast on the Darkness into which Ourselves,
So late emerged from, shall so soon expire.

LXVIII.

We are no other than a moving row
Of Magic Shadow-shapes that come and go
Round with the Sun-illumined Lantern held
In Midnight by the Master of the Show;

LXIX.

But helpless Pieces of the Game He plays
Upon this Chequer-board of Nights and Days;
Hither and thither moves, and checks, and slays,
And one by one back in the Closet lays.

LXX.

The Ball no question makes of Ayes and Noes,
But Here or There as strikes the Player goes;
And He that toss'd you down into the Field,
He knows about it all — HE knows — HE knows!

LXXI.

The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ,
Moves on: nor all your Piety nor Wit
  Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,
Nor all your Tears wash out a Word of it.

. . . . . .

XCVI.

Yet Ah, that Spring should vanish with the Rose!
That Youth's sweet-scented manuscript should close!
  The Nightingale that in the branches sang,
Ah whence, and whither flown again, who knows!

XCVII.

Would but the Desert of the Fountain yield
One glimpse — if dimly, yet indeed, reveal'd,
  To which the fainting Traveller might spring,
As springs the trampled herbage of the field!

XCVIII.

Would but some wingèd Angel ere too late
Arrest the yet unfolded Roll of Fate,
  And make the stern Recorder otherwise
Enregister, or quite obliterate!

XCIX.

Ah Love! could you and I with Him conspire
To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire,
  Would not we shatter it to bits — and then
Re-mould it nearer to the Heart's desire!

C.

Yon rising Moon that looks for us again —
How oft hereafter will she wax and wane;
How oft hereafter rising look for us
Through this same Garden — and for *one* in vain!

CI.

And when like her, oh Sákí, you shall pass
Among the Guests Star-scatter'd on the Grass,
And in your joyous errand reach the spot
Where I made One — turn down an empty Glass!

TAMÁM.

ROBERT BROWNING

(1812–1889.)

THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN.

I.

HAMELIN Town's in Brunswick,
By famous Hanover city;
The river Weser, deep and wide,
Washes its wall on the southern side;
A pleasanter spot you never spied;
But when begins my ditty,
Almost five hundred years ago,
To see the townsfolk suffer so
From vermin, was a pity.

II.

Rats!
They fought the dogs, and killed the cats,
And bit the babies in the cradles,
And ate the cheeses out of the vats,
And licked the soup from the cooks' own ladles,
Split open the kegs of salted sprats,
Made nests inside men's Sunday hats,

And even spoiled the women's chats,
By drowning their speaking
With shrieking and squeaking
In fifty different sharps and flats.

III.

At last the people in a body
To the Town Hall came flocking:
"'Tis clear," cried they, "our Mayor's a noddy;
And as for our Corporation — shocking
To think we buy gowns lined with ermine
For dolts that can't or won't determine
What's best to rid us of our vermin!
You hope, because you're old and obese,
To find in the furry civic robe ease?
Rouse up, Sirs! Give your brains a racking
To find the remedy we're lacking,
Or, sure as fate, we'll send you packing!"
At this the Mayor and Corporation
Quaked with a mighty consternation.

IV.

An hour they sate in council —
At length the Mayor broke silence:
"For a guilder I'd my ermine gown sell;
I wish I were a mile hence!
It's easy to bid one rack one's brain —
I'm sure my poor head aches again,
I've scratched it so, and all in vain.
Oh for a trap, a trap, a trap!"
Just as he said this, what should hap
At the chamber door but a gentle tap?

"Bless us," cried the Mayor, "what's that?"
(With the Corporation as he sat,
Looking little though wondrous fat;
Nor brighter was his eye, nor moister
Than a too-long-opened oyster,
Save when at noon his paunch grew mutinous
For a plate of turtle, green and glutinous,)
"Only a scraping of shoes on the mat?
Anything like the sound of a rat
Makes my heart go pit-a-pat!"

v.

"Come in!" — the Mayor cried, looking bigger;
And in did come the strangest figure:
His queer long coat from heel to head
Was half of yellow and half of red;
And he himself was tall and thin;
With sharp blue eyes, each like a pin;
And light loose hair, yet swarthy skin;
No tuft on cheek nor beard on chin,
But lips where smiles went out and in —
There was no guessing his kith and kin!
And nobody could enough admire
The tall man and his quaint attire.
Quoth one: "It's as my great-grandsire,
Starting up at the trump of doom's tone,
Had walked this way from his painted tombstone!"

vi.

He advanced to the council-table:
And, "Please your honors," said he, "I'm able,

"Tripping and Skipping, Ran Merrily After
The Wonderful Music with Shouting and Laughter."

By means of a secret charm, to draw
All creatures living beneath the sun,
That creep, or swim, or fly, or run,
After me so as you never saw!
And I chiefly use my charm
On creatures that do people harm —
The mole, and toad, and newt, and viper
And people call me the Pied Piper."
(And here they noticed round his neck
A scarf of red and yellow stripe,
To match with his coat of the self same check;
And at the scarf's end hung a pipe;
And his fingers, they noticed, were ever straying
As if impatient to be playing
Upon this pipe, as low it dangled
Over his vesture so old-fangled.)
"Yet," said he, "poor piper as I am,
In Tartary I freed the Cham,
Last June, from his huge swarm of gnats;
I eased in Asia the Nizam
Of a monstrous brood of vampire-bats;
And, as for what your brain bewilders —
If I can rid your town of rats,
Will you give me a thousand guilders?"
"One? fifty thousand!"— was the exclamation
Of the astonished Mayor and Corporation.

VII.

Into the street the Piper stept,
Smiling first a little smile,
As if he knew what magic slept
In his quiet pipe the while;

Then, like a musical adept,
To blow the pipe his lips he wrinkled,
And green and blue his sharp eyes twinkled,
Like a candle flame where salt is sprinkled;
And ere three shrill notes the pipe uttered,
You heard as if an army muttered;
And the muttering grew to a grumbling;
And the grumbling grew to a mighty rumbling;
And out of the houses the rats came tumbling.
Great rats, small rats, lean rats, brawny rats,
Brown rats, black rats, gray rats, tawny rats,
Grave old plodders, gay young friskers,
  Fathers, mothers, uncles, cousins,
Cocking tails and pricking whiskers;
  Families by tens and dozens,
Brothers, sisters, husbands, wives —
Followed the Piper for their lives.
From street to street he piped advancing,
And step for step they followed dancing,
Until they came to the river Weser
Wherein all plunged and perished
— Save one who, stout as Julius Cæsar,
Swam across and lived to carry
(As he, the manuscript he cherished)
To Rat-land home his commentary,
Which was: "At the first shrill notes of the pipe,
I heard a sound as of scraping tripe,
And putting apples, wondrous ripe,
Into a cider-press's gripe —
And a moving away of pickle-tub boards,
And a leaving ajar of conserve-cupboards,
And a drawing the corks of train-oil-flasks,

And a breaking the hoops of butter-casks;
And it seemed as if a voice
(Sweeter far than by harp or by psaltery
Is breathed) called out, 'O rats, rejoice!
The world is grown to one vast drysaltery!
So munch on, crunch on, take your nuncheon,
Breakfast, supper, dinner, luncheon!'
And just as a bulky sugar-puncheon,
All ready staved, like a great sun shone
Glorious, scarce an inch before me,
Just as methought it said, 'Come, bore me!'
— I found the Weser rolling o'er me.'

VIII.

You should have heard the Hamelin people
Ringing the bells till they rocked the steeple;
"Go," cried the Mayor, "and get long poles!
Poke out the nests and block up the holes!
Consult with carpenters and builders,
And leave in our town not even a trace
Of the rats!" — when suddenly, up the face
Of the Piper perked in the market-place,
With a, "First, if you please, my thousand guilders!"

IX.

A thousand guilders! The Mayor looked blue;
So did the Corporation too.
For council dinners made rare havoc
With Claret, Moselle, Vin-de-Grave, Hock;
And half the money would replenish
Their cellar's biggest butt with Rhenish.

To pay this sum to a wandering fellow
With a gipsy coat of red and yellow!
"Beside," quoth the Mayor, with a knowing wink,
"Our business was done at the river's brink;
We saw with our eyes the vermin sink,
And what's dead can't come to life, I think.
So, friend, we're not the folks to shrink
From the duty of giving you something for drink,
And a matter of money to put in your poke;
But, as for the guilders, what we spoke
Of them, as you very well know, was in joke.
Beside, our losses have made us thrifty.
A thousand guilders! Come, take fifty!"

X.

The piper's face fell, and he cried,
"No trifling! I can't wait! beside,
I've promised to visit by dinnertime
Bagdat, and accept the prime
Of the head cook's pottage, all he's rich in,
For having left, in the Caliph's kitchen,
Of a nest of scorpions no survivor.
With him I proved no bargain-driver;
With you, don't think I'll bate a stiver!
And folks who put me in a passion
May find me pipe to another fashion."

XI.

"How?" cried the Mayor, "d'ye think I'll brook
Being worse treated than a cook?
Insulted by a lazy ribald
With idle pipe and vesture piebald?

You threaten us, fellow? Do your worst,
Blow your pipe there till you burst!"

XII.

Once more he stept into the street;
And to his lips again
Laid his long pipe of smooth straight cane;
And ere he blew three notes (such sweet
Soft notes as yet musician's cunning
Never gave the enraptured air)
There was a rustling that seemed like a bustling
Of merry crowds justling at pitching and hustling;
Small feet were pattering, wooden shoes clattering,
Little hands clapping, and little tongues chattering,
And, like fowls in a farmyard when barley is scattering,
Out came the children running.
All the little boys and girls,
With rosy cheeks and flaxen curls,
And sparkling eyes and teeth like pearls,
Tripping and skipping, ran merrily after
The wonderful music with shouting and laughter.

XIII.

The Mayor was dumb, and the Council stood
As if they were changed into blocks of wood, —
Unable to move a step, or cry
To the children merrily skipping by, —
And could only follow with the eye
That joyous crowd at the Piper's back.
But how the Mayor was on the rack,
And the wretched Council's bosoms beat,
As the Piper turned from the High Street

To where the Weser rolled its waters
Right in the way of their sons and daughters!
However, he turned from south to west,
And to Koppelberg Hill his steps addressed,
And after him the children pressed;
Great was the joy in every breast.
"He never can cross that mighty top!
He's forced to let the piping drop,
And we shall see our children stop!"
When, lo, as they reached the mountain's side,
A wondrous portal opened wide,
As if a cavern was suddenly hollowed;
And the Piper advanced and the children followed;
And when all were in, to the very last,
The door in the mountain-side shut fast.
Did I say all? No! One was lame,
And could not dance the whole of the way;
And in after years, if you would blame
His sadness, he was used to say, —
"It's dull in our town since my playmates left!
I can't forget that I'm bereft
Of all the pleasant sights they see,
Which the Piper also promised me;
For he led us, he said, to a joyous land,
Joining the town and just at hand,
Where waters gushed and fruit-trees grew,
And flowers put forth a fairer hue,
And every thing was strange and new;
The sparrows were brighter than peacocks here,
And their dogs outran our fallow deer,
And honey-bees had lost their stings,
And horses were born with eagles' wings;

And just as I became assured
My lame foot would be speedily cured,
The music stopped and I stood still,
And found myself outside the Hill,
Left alone against my will,
To go now limping as before,
And never hear of that country more!"

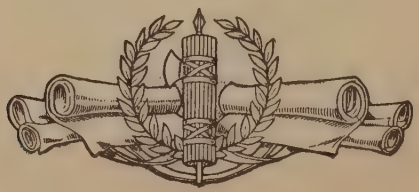
XIV.

Alas, alas for Hamelin!
There came into many a burgher's pate
A text which says, that Heaven's gate
Opes to the rich at as easy rate
As the needle's eye takes a camel in!
The Mayor sent East, West, North, and South,
To offer the piper by word of mouth,
Wherever it was men's lot to find him,
Silver and gold to his heart's content,
If he'd only return the way he went,
And bring the children behind him
But when they saw 'twas a lost endeavor,
And piper and dancers were gone for ever,
They made a decree that lawyers never
Should think their records dated duly
If, after the day of the month and year,
These words did not as well appear,
"And so long after what happened here
On the Twenty-second of July,
Thirteen Hundred and Seventy-six:"
And the better in memory to fix
The place of the children's last retreat
They called it the Pied Piper's Street —

Where any one playing on pipe or tabor
Was sure for the future to lose his labor.
Nor suffered they hostelry or tavern
To shock with mirth a street so solemn;
But opposite the place of the cavern
They wrote the story on a column,
And on the Great Church window painted
The same, to make the world acquainted
How their children were stolen away;
And there it stands to this very day.
And I must not omit to say
That in Transylvania there's a tribe
Of alien people that ascribe
The outlandish ways and dress
On which their neighbors lay such stress
To their fathers and mothers having risen
Out of some subterranean prison
Into which they were trepanned
Long time ago, in a mighty band,
Out of Hamelin town in Brunswick land,
But how or why, they don't understand.

XV.

So, Willy, let you and me be wipers
Of scores out with all men — especially pipers;
And, whether they pipe us free fróm rats or fróm mice
If we've promised them aught, let us keep our promise.



INCIDENT OF THE FRENCH CAMP.

YOU know, we French storm'd Ratisbon:
A mile or so away
On a little mound, Napoleon,
Stood on our storming-day;
With neck out-thrust, you fancy how,
Legs wide, arms lock'd behind,
As if to balance the prone brow
Oppressive with its mind.

Just as perhaps he mus'd "My plans
That soar, to earth may fall,
Let once my army leader Lannes
Waver at yonder wall," —
Out 'twixt the battery smokes there flew
A rider, bound on bound
Full-galloping; nor bridle drew
Until he reach'd the mound.

Then off there flung in smiling joy,
And held himself erect
By just his horse's mane, a boy:
You hardly could suspect —
(So tight he kept his lips compress'd,
Scarce any blood came through)
You look'd twice ere you saw his breast
Was all but shot in two.

"Well," cried he, "Emperor, by God's grace
We've got you Ratisbon!
The Marshal's in the market-place,
And you'll be there anon
To see your flag-bird flap his vans
Where I, to heart's desire,
Perch'd him!" The chief's eye flash'd; his plans
Soar'd up again like fire.

The chief's eye flash'd; but presently
Soften'd itself, as sheathes
A film the mother-eagle's eye
When her bruis'd eaglet breathes.
"You're wounded!" "Nay," the soldier's pride
Touch'd to the quick, he said:
"I'm kill'd, Sire!" And his chief beside,
Smiling the boy fell dead.

THE BISHOP ORDERS HIS TOMB AT SAINT PRAXED'S CHURCH.

Rome, 15—

VANITY, saith the preacher, vanity!
Draw round my bed: is Anselm keeping back?
Nephews — sons mine . . . ah God, I know not! Well —
She, men, would have to be your mother once,
Old Grandolf envied me, so fair she was!
What's done is done, and she is dead beside,
Dead long ago, and I am Bishop since,
And as she died so must we die ourselves,
And thence ye may perceive the world's a dream.
Life, how and what is it? As here I lie
In this state-chamber, dying by degrees,
Hours and long hours in the dead night, I ask,
"Do I live, am I dead?" Peace, peace seems all.
Saint Praxed's ever was the church for peace;
And so, about this tomb of mine. I fought
With tooth and nail to save my niche, ye know:
— Old Gandolf cozen'd me, despite my care;
Shrewd was that snatch from out the corner South
He graced his carrion with, God curse the same!
Yet still my niche is not so cramp'd but thence

One sees the pulpit on the epistle-side,
And somewhat of the choir, those silent seats,
And up into the aëry dome where live
The angels, and a sunbeam's sure to lurk:
And I shall fill my slab of basalt there,
And 'neath my tabernacle take my rest,
With those nine columns round me, two and two,
The odd one at my feet where Anselm stands:
Peach-blossom marble all, the rare, the ripe
As fresh-pour'd red wine of a mighty pulse,
— Old Gandolf with his paltry onion-stone.
Put me where I may look at him! True peach,
Rosy and flawless: how I earn'd the prize!
Draw close: that conflagration of my church
— What then? So much was sav'd if aught were miss'd!
My sons, ye would not be my death? Go dig
The white-grape vineyard where the oil-press stood,
Drop water gently till the surface sink,
And if ye find . . . Ah God, I know not, I! . . .
Bedded in store of rotten figleaves soft,
And corded up in a tight olive-frail,
Some lump, ah God, of *lapis lazuli*,
Big as a Jew's head cut off at the nape,
Blue as a vein o'er the Madonna's breast . . .
Sons, all have I bequeathed you, villas, all,
That brave Frascati villa with its bath,
So, let the blue lump poise between my knees,
Like God the Father's globe on both his hands
Ye worship in the Jesu Church so gay,
For Gandolf shall not choose but see and burst!
Swift as a weaver's shuttle fleet our years:

Man goeth to the grave, and where is he?
Did I say, basalt for my slab, sons? Black —
'Twas ever antique-black I meant! How else
Shall ye contrast my frieze to come beneath?
The bas-relief in bronze ye promis'd me,
Those Pans and Nymphs ye wot of, and perchance
Some tripod, thyrsus, with a vase or so,
The Saviour at his sermon on the mount,
Saint Praxed in a glory, and one Pan
Ready to twitch the Nymph's last garment off,
And Moses with the tables . . . but I know
Ye mark me not! What do they whisper thee,
Child of my bowels, Anselm? Ah, ye hope
To revel down my villas while I gasp
Brick'd o'er with beggar's mouldy travertine
Which Gandolf from his tomb-top chuckles at!
Nay, boys, ye love me — all of Jasper, then!
'Tis jasper ye stand pledged to, lest I grieve
My bath must needs be left behind, alas!
One block, pure green as a pistachio-nut,
There's plenty jasper somewhere in the world —
And have I not Saint Praxed's ear to pray
Horses for ye, and brown Greek manuscripts,
And mistresses with great smooth marbly limbs?
— That's if ye carve my epitaph aright,
Choice Latin, pick'd phrase, Tully's every word,
No gaudy ware like Gandolf's second line —
Tully, my masters? Ulpian serves his need!
And then how shall I lie through centuries,
And hear the blessed mutter of the mass,
And see God made and eaten all day long,
And feel the steady candle-flame, and taste

Good strong thick stupefying incense-smoke!
For as I lie here, hours of the dead night,
Dying in state and by such slow degrees,
I fold my arms as if they clasp'd a crook,
And stretch my feet forth straight as stone can point,
And let the bedclothes, for a mortcloth, drop
Into great laps and folds of sculptor's work:
And as yon tapers dwindle, and strange thoughts
Grow, with a certain humming in my ears,
About the life before I liv'd this life,
And this life, too, popes, cardinals and priests,
Saint Praxed at his sermon on the mount,
Your tall pale mother with her talking eyes,
And new-found agate urns as fresh as day,
And marble's language, Latin pure, discreet,
— Aha, ELUCESCEBAT quoth our friend?
No Tully, said I, Ulpian at the best!
Evil and brief hath been my pilgrimage.
All *lapis*, all, sons! Else I give the Pope
My villas! Will ye ever eat my heart?
Ever your eyes were as a lizard's quick,
They glitter like your mother's for my soul,
Or ye would heighten my impoverish'd frieze,
Piece out its starv'd design, and fill my vase
With grapes, and add a vizor and a Term,
And to the tripod ye would tie a lynx
That in his struggle throws the thyrsus down,
To comfort me on my entablature
Wherein I am to lie till I must ask,
"Do I live, am I dead?" There, leave me, there!
For ye have stabb'd me with ingratitude
To death: ye wish it — God, ye wish it! Stone —

Gritstone, a-crumble! Clammy squares which sweat
As if the corpse they keep were oozing through —
And no more *lapis* to delight the world!
Well, go! I bless ye. Fewer tapers there,
But in a row: and, going, turn your backs
— Ay, like departing altar-ministrants,
And leave me in my church, the church for peace
That I may watch at leisure if he leers —
Old Gandolf — at me, from his onion-stone,
As still he envied me, so fair she was!

"*HOW THEY BROUGHT THE GOOD NEWS FROM GHENT TO AIX.*"

[16—]

I SPRANG to the stirrup, and Joris, and he;
I gallop'd, Dirck gallop'd, we gallop'd all three;
"Good speed!" cried the watch, as the gate-bolts undrew;
"Speed!" echoed the wall to us galloping through;
Behind shut the postern, the light sank to rest,
And into the midnight we gallop'd abreast.

Not a word to each other; we kept the great pace
Neck by neck, stride by stride, never changing our place;
I turn'd in my saddle and made its girths tight,
Then shorten'd each stirrup, and set the pique right,
Rebuckled the cheek-strap, chain'd slacker the bit,
Nor gallop'd less steadily Roland a whit.

'Twas moonset at starting; but while we drew near
Lokeren, the cocks crew and twilight dawn'd clear;
At Boom, a great yellow star came out to see;
At Düffeld, 'twas morning as plain as could be;
And from Mechelen church-steeple we heard the half chime,
So, Joris broke silence with, "Yet there is time!"

At Aershot, up leap'd of a sudden the sun,
And against him the cattle stood black every one,
To stare thro' the mist at us galloping past,
And I saw my stout galloper Roland at last,
With resolute shoulders, each butting away
The haze, as some bluff river headland its spray:

And his low head and crest, just one sharp ear bent back
For my voice, and the other prick'd out on his track;
And one eye's black intelligence, — ever that glance
O'er its white edge at me, his own master, askance!
And the thick heavy spume-flakes which aye and anon
His fierce lips shook upwards in galloping on.

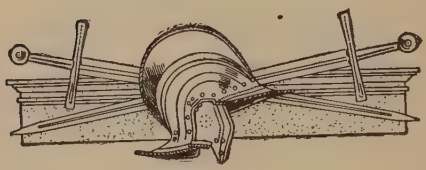
By Hasselt, Dirck groan'd; and cried Joris "Stay spur!
Your Roos gallop'd bravely, the fault's not in her,
We'll remember at Aix" — for one heard the quick wheeze
Of her chest, saw the stretch'd neck and staggering knees,
And sunk tail, and horrible heave of the flank,
As down on her haunches she shudder'd and sank.

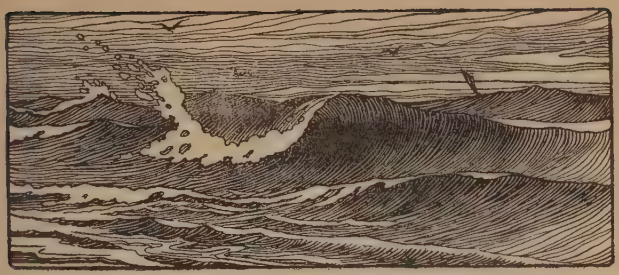
So, we were left galloping, Joris and I,
Past Looz and past Tongres, no cloud in the sky;
The broad sun above laugh'd a pitiless laugh,
'Neath our feet broke the brittle bright stubble like chaff;
Till over by Dalhem a dome-spire sprang white,
And "Gallop" gasped Joris, "for Aix is in sight!"

"How they'll greet us!" — and all in a moment his roan
Roll'd neck and croup over, lay dead as a stone;
And there was my Roland to bear the whole weight
Of the news which alone could save Aix from her fate,
With his nostrils like pits full of blood to the brim,
And with circles of red for his eye-sockets' rim.

Then I cast loose my buffcoat, each holster let fall,
Shook off both my jack-boots, let go belt and all,
Stood up in the stirrup, lean'd, patted his ear,
Call'd my Roland his pet name, my horse without peer;
Clapp'd my hands, laugh'd and sang, any noise, bad or good,
Till at length into Aix Roland gallop'd and stood.

And all I remember is, friends flocking round
As I sat with his head 'twixt my knees on the ground;
And no voice but was praising this Roland of mine,
As I pour'd down his throat our last measure of wine,
Which (the burgesses voted by common consent)
Was no more than his due who brought good news
from Ghent.





CHARLES KINGSLEY

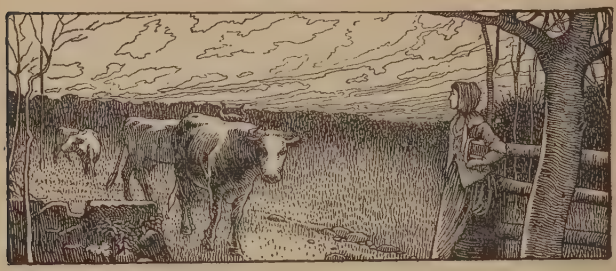
(1819–1875.)

THE THREE FISHERS.

THREE fishers went sailing out into the west —
Out into the west as the sun went down;
Each thought of the woman who loved him the best,
And the children stood watching them out of the town;
For men must work, and women must weep;
And there's little to earn, and many to keep,
Though the harbor bar be moaning.

Three wives sat up in the light-house tower,
And trimmed the lamps as the sun went down;
And they looked at the squall, and they looked at the shower,
And the rack it came rolling up, ragged and brown·
But men must work, and women must weep,
Though storms be sudden, and waters deep,
And the harbor bar be moaning.

Three corpses lay out on the shining sands
In the morning gleam as the tide went down,
And the women are watching and wringing their hands,
For those who will never come back to the town;
For men must work, and women must weep —
And the sooner it's over, the sooner to sleep —
And good-bye to the bar and its moaning.



THE SANDS O' DEE.

"O MARY, go and call the cattle home,
And call the cattle home,
And call the cattle home,
Across the sands o' Dee!"
The western wind was wild and dank wi' foam,
And all alone went she.

The creeping tide came up along the sand,
And o'er and o'er the sand,
And round and round the sand,
As far as eye could see;
The blinding mist came down and hid the land:
And never home came she.

"Oh is it weed, or fish, or floating hair —
A tress o' golden hair,
O' drowned maiden's hair —
Above the nets at sea?
Was never salmon yet that shone so fair,
Among the stakes on Dee."

They rowed her in across the rolling foam —
The cruel, crawling foam,
The cruel, hungry foam —
To her grave beside the sea;
But still the boatmen hear her call the cattle home
Across the sands o' Dee.

A FAREWELL.

MY fairest child, I have no song to give you;
No lark could pipe to skies so dull and gray:
Yet, ere we part, one lesson I can leave you
For every day.

Be good, sweet maid, and let who will be clever;
Do noble things, not dream them, all day long:
And so make life, death, and that vast forever
One grand, sweet song.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

(1819–1891.)

TO THE DANDELION.

DEAR common flower, that grow'st beside the way,
Fringing the dusty road with harmless gold!
First pledge of blithesome May,
Which children pluck, and, full of pride, uphold —
High-hearted buccaneers, o'erjoyed that they
An Eldorado in the grass have found,
Which not the rich earth's ample round
May match in wealth! — thou art more dear to me
Than all the prouder summer-blooms may be.

Gold such as thine ne'er drew the Spanish prow
Through the primeval hush of Indian seas;
Nor wrinkled the lean brow
Of age, to rob the lover's heart of ease.
'Tis the Spring's largess, which she scatters now
To rich and poor alike, with lavish hand;
Though most hearts never understand

To take it at God's value, but pass by
The offered wealth with unrewarded eye.

Thou art my tropics and mine Italy;
To look at thee unlocks a warmer clime;
The eyes thou givest me
Are in the heart, and heed not space or time:
Not in mid June the golden-cuirassed bee
Feels a more summer-like, warm ravishment
In the white lily's breezy tent,
His conquered Sybaris, than I, when first
From the dark green thy yellow circles burst.

Then think I of deep shadows on the grass;
Of meadows where in sun the cattle graze,
Where, as the breezes pass,
The gleaming rushes lean a thousand ways;
Of leaves that slumber in a cloudy mass,
Or whiten in the wind; of waters blue,
That from the distance sparkle through
Some woodland gap; and of a sky above,
Where one white cloud like a stray lamb doth move.

My childhood's earliest thoughts are linked with thee;
The sight of thee calls back the robin's song,
Who, from the dark old tree
Beside the door, sang clearly all day long;
And I, secure in childish piety,
Listened as if I heard an angel sing
With news from heaven, which he did bring
Fresh every day to my untainted ears,
When birds and flowers and I were happy peers.

How like a prodigal doth nature seem,
When thou, for all thy gold, so common art!
Thou teachest me to deem
More sacredly of every human heart,
Since each reflects in joy its scanty gleam
Of heaven, and could some wondrous secret show,
Did we but pay the love we owe,
And with a child's undoubting wisdom look
On all these living pages of God's book.

IN THE TWILIGHT.

EN say the sullen instrument,
That, from the Master's bow,
With pangs of joy or woe,
Feels music's soul through every fibre sent,
Whispers the ravished strings
More than he knew or meant;
Old summers in its memory glow;
The secrets of the wind it sings;
It hears the April-loosened springs;
And mixes with its mood
All it dreamed when it stood
In the murmurous pine-wood
Long ago!

The magical moonlight then
Steeped every bough and cone;
The roar of the brook in the glen
Came dim from the distance blown;
The wind through its glooms sang low,

And it swayed to and fro
With delight as it stood
In the wonderful wood,
Long ago!

O my life, have we not had seasons
That only said, Live and rejoice?
That asked not for causes and reasons,
But made us all feeling and voice?
When we went with the winds in their blowing,
When Nature and we were peers,
And we seemed to share in the flowing
Of the inexhaustible years?
Have we not from the earth drawn juices
Too fine for earth's sordid uses?
Have I heard, have I seen
All I feel, all I know?
Doth my heart overween?
Or could it have been
Long ago?

Sometimes a breath floats by me,
An odor from Dreamland sent,
That makes the ghost seem nigh me
Of a splendor that came and went,
Of a life lived somewhere, I know not
In what diviner sphere,
Of memories that stay not and go not,
Like music heard once by an ear
That cannot forget or reclaim it,
A something so shy, it would shame it
To make it a show,

A something too vague, could I name it,
For others to know,
As if I had lived it or dreamed it,
As if I had acted or schemed it,
Long ago!

And yet, could I live it over,
This life that stirs in my brain,
Could I be both maiden and lover,
Moon and tide, bee and clover,
As I seem to have been, once again,
Could I but speak it and show it,
This pleasure more sharp than pain,
That baffles and lures me so,
The world should once more have a poet,
Such as it had
In the ages glad,
Long ago!

THE FIRST SNOW-FALL.

HE snow had begun in the gloaming,
And busily all the night
Had been heaping field and highway
With a silence deep and white.

Every pine and fir and hemlock
Wore ermine too dear for an earl,
And the poorest twig on the elm-tree
Was ridged inch deep with pearl.

From sheds new-roofed with Carrara
Came Chanticleer's muffled crow,
The stiff rails softened to swan's-down,
And still fluttered down the snow.

I stood and watched by the window
The noiseless work of the sky,
And the sudden flurries of snow-birds,
Like brown leaves whirling by.

I thought of a mound in sweet Auburn
Where a little headstone stood;
How the flakes were folding it gently,
As did robins the babes in the wood.

Up spoke our own little Mabel,
Saying, "Father, who makes it snow?"
And I told of the good All-father
Who cares for us here below.

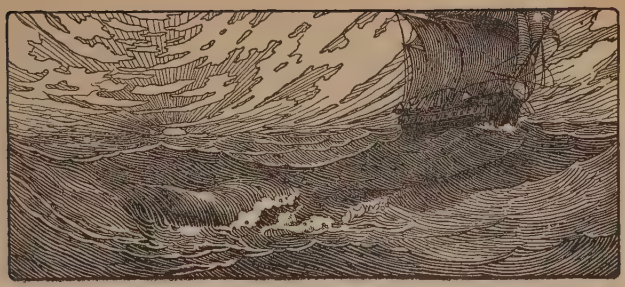
Again I looked at the snow-fall
And thought of the leaden sky
That arched o'er our first great sorrow,
When that mound was heaped so high.

I remembered the gradual patience
That fell from that cloud like snow,
Flake by flake, healing and hiding
The scar that renewed our woe.

And again to the child I whispered,
"The snow that husheth all,

Darling, the merciful Father
Alone can make it fall!"

Then, with eyes that saw not, I kissed her;
And she, kissing back, could not know
That *my* kiss was given to her sister,
Folded close under deepening snow.



WALT WHITMAN

(1819–1892.)

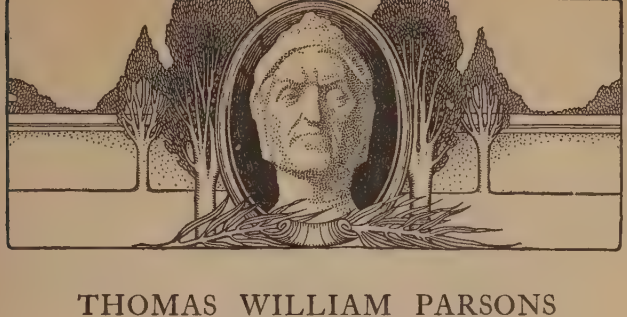
O CAPTAIN! MY CAPTAIN!

O CAPTAIN! my captain! our fearful trip is done,
The ship has weathered every rack, the prize we sought is won,
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring;
But O heart! heart! heart!
O the bleeding drops of red,
Where on the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells;
Rise up — for you the flag is flung — for you the bugle trills,
For you bouquets and ribboned wreaths — for you the shores acrowding,

For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces
turning;
Here Captain! dear father!
This arm beneath your head!
It is some dream that on the deck
You've fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still,
My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor
will,
The ship is anchored safe and sound, its voyage closed
and done,
From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object
won;
Exult O shores, and ring O bells!
But I, with mournful tread,
Walk the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.



THOMAS WILLIAM PARSONS

(1819–1892.)

ON A BUST OF DANTE.

SEE, from this counterfeit of him
Whom Arno shall remember long,
How stern of lineament, how grim,
The father was of Tuscan song:
There but the burning sense of wrong,
Perpetual care and scorn, abide;
Small friendship for the lordly throng;
Distrust of all the world beside.

Faithful if this wan image be,
No dream his life was, — but a fight!
Could any Beatrice see
A lover in that anchorite?
To that cold Ghibelline's gloomy sight
Who could have guessed the visions came
Of Beauty, veiled with heavenly light,
In circles of eternal flame?

The lips as Cumæ's cavern close,
The cheeks with fast and sorrow thin,

The rigid front, almost morose,
But for the patient hope within,
Declare a life whose course hath been
Unsullied still, though still severe,
Which, through the wavering days of sin,
Kept itself icy-chaste and clear.

Not wholly such his haggard look
When wandering once, forlorn, he strayed,
With no companion save his book,
To Corvo's hushed monastic shade;
Where, as the Benedictine laid
His palm upon the convent's guest,
The single boon for which he prayed
Was peace, that pilgrim's one request.

Peace dwells not here, — this rugged face
Betrays no spirit of repose;
The sullen warrior sole we trace,
The marble man of many woes.
Such was his mien when first arose
The thought of that strange tale divine,
When hell he peopled with his foes,
Dread scourge of many a guilty line.

War to the last he waged with all
The tyrant canker-worms of earth;
Baron and duke, in hold and hall,
Cursed the dark hour that gave him birth;
He used Rome's harlot for his mirth;
Plucked bare hypocrisy and crime;
But valiant souls of knightly worth
Transmitted to the rolls of Time.

O Time! whose verdicts mock our own,
The only righteous judge art thou;
That poor old exile, sad and lone,
Is Latium's other Virgil now:
Before his name the nations bow;
His words are parcel of mankind,
Deep in whose hearts, as on his brow,
The marks have sunk of Dante's mind.

DIRGE FOR ONE WHO FELL IN BATTLE.

ROOM for a soldier! lay him in the clover;
He loved the fields, and they shall be his cover;
Make his mound with hers who called him once her lover:
Where the rain may rain upon it,
Where the sun may shine upon it,
Where the lamb hath lain upon it,
And the bee will dine upon it.

Bear him to no dismal tomb under city churches;
Take him to the fragrant fields, by the silver birches,
Where the whip-poor-will shall mourn, where the oriole perches:
Make his mound with sunshine on it,
Where the bee will dine upon it,
Where the lamb hath lain upon it,
And the rain will rain upon it.

Busy as the bee was he, and his rest should be the clover;
Gentle as the lamb was he, and the fern should be his cover;
Fern and rosemary shall grow my soldier's pillow over:

Where the rain may rain upon it,
Where the sun may shine upon it,
Where the lamb hath lain upon it,
And the bee will dine upon it.

Sunshine in his heart, the rain would come full often
Out of those tender eyes which evermore did soften:
He never could look cold till we saw him in his coffin.
Make his mound with sunshine on it,
Plant the lordly pine upon it,
Where the moon may stream upon it,
And memory shall dream upon it.

"Captain or Colonel," — whatever invocation
Suit our hymn the best, no matter for thy station, —
On thy grave the rain shall fall from the eyes of a mighty nation.
Long as the sun doth shine upon it
Shall glow the goodly pine upon it,
Long as the stars do gleam upon it
Shall memory come to dream upon it.

JULIA WARD HOWE

(1819– .)

BATTLE-HYMN OF THE REPUBLIC.

MINE eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord:
He is tramping out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored;
He hath loosed the fateful lightning of his terrible swift sword:
His truth is marching on.

I have seen Him in the watch-fires of a hundred circling camps;
They have builded Him an altar in the evening dews and damps;
I can read His righteous sentence by the dim and flaring lamps.
His day is marching on.

I have read a fiery gospel, writ in burnished rows of steel:

"As ye deal with my contemners, so with you my
grace shall deal;
Let the Hero, born of woman, crush the serpent with
his heel,
Since God is marching on."

He has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never
call retreat;
He is sifting out the hearts of men before his judg-
ment-seat:
Oh! be swift, my soul, to answer Him! be jubilant,
my feet!
Our God is marching on.

In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the
sea,
With a glory in his bosom that transfigures you and me:
As he died to make men holy, let us die to make men
free,
While God is marching on.

HENRY HOWARD BROWNELL

(1820–1872.)

THE SPHINX.

THEY glare — those stony eyes!
That in the fierce sun-rays
Showered from these burning skies,
Through untold centuries
Have kept their sleepless and unwinking gaze.

Since what unnumbered year
Hast thou kept watch and ward,
And o'er the buried Land of Fear
So grimly held thy guard?
No faithless slumber snatching,
Still couched in silence brave,
Like some fierce hound long watching
Above her master's grave.

No fabled Shape art thou!
On that thought-freighted brow
And in those smooth weird lineaments we find,
Though traced all darkly, even now,
The relics of a Mind:

And gather dimly thence
A vague, half-human sense —
The strange and sad Intelligence
That sorrow leaves behind.

Dost thou in anguish thus
Still brood o'er Œdipus?
And weave enigmas to mislead anew,
And stultify the blind
Dull heads of human kind,
And inly make thy moan
That mid the hated crew,
Whom thou so long couldst vex,
Bewilder, and perplex,
Thou yet couldst find a subtler than thine own?

Even now, methinks that those
Dark, heavy lips, which close
In such a stern repose,
Seem burdened with some Thought unsaid,
And hoard within their portals dread
Some fearful Secret there, —
Which to the listening earth
She may not whisper forth,
Not even to the air, —

Of awful wonders hid
In yon dread pyramid,
The home of magic Fears,
Of chambers vast and lonely,
Watched by the Genii only,
Who tend their Masters' long-forgotten biers;

And treasures that have shone
On cavern walls alone
Four thousand, thousand years.
Those sullen orbs wouldst thou eclipse,
And ope those massy, tomb-like lips,
Many a riddle thou couldst solve
Which all blindly men revolve.

Would She but tell! She knows
Of the old Pharaohs,
Could count the Ptolemies' long line;
Each mighty Myth's original hath seen,
Apis, Anubis — Ghosts that haunt between
The Bestial and Divine —
(Such, He that sleeps in Philœ — He that stands
In gloom, unworshipped, 'neath his rock-hewn
fane —
And They who, sitting on Memnonian sands,
Cast their long shadows o'er the desert plain:)
Hath marked Nitocris pass,
And Ozymandias
Deep-versed in many a dark Egyptian wile;
The Hebrew Boy hath eyed
Cold to the master's bride:
And that Medusan stare hath frozen the smile
Of Her all love and guile,
For whom the Cæsar sighed,
And the World-Loser died —
The Darling of the Nile.

FREDERICK LOCKER-LAMPSON

(1821–1895.)

THE WIDOW'S MITE.

A WIDOW, — she had only one!
A puny and decrepit son;
But, day and night,
Though fretful oft, and weak and small,
A loving child, he was her all, —
The Widow's Mite.

The Widow's Mite — ay, so sustain'd
She battled onward, nor complain'd
Though friends were fewer:
And while she toil'd for daily fare,
A little crutch upon the stair
Was music to her.

I saw her then, and now I see
That, though resign'd and cheerful, she
Has sorrow'd much:
She has — He gave it tenderly —
Much faith, and, carefully laid by
A little crutch.

TO MY GRANDMOTHER.

(Suggested by a Picture by Mr. Romney.)

HIS relative of mine,
Was she seventy-and-nine
When she died?
By the canvas may be seen
How she look'd at seventeen,
As a bride.

Beneath a summer tree,
Her maiden reverie
Has a charm;
Her ringlets are in taste;
What an arm! . . . what a waist
For an arm!

With her bridal-wreath, bouquet,
Lace farthingale, and gay
Falbala,
Were Romney's limning true,
What a lucky dog were you,
Grandpapa!

Her lips are sweet as love;
They are parting! Do they move?
Are they dumb?
Her eyes are blue, and beam
Beseechingly, and seem
To say, "Come!"

What funny fancy slips
From atween these cherry lips!
Whisper me,
Sweet sorceress in paint,
What canon says I mayn't
Marry thee?

That good-for-nothing Time
Has a confidence sublime!
When I first
Saw this lady, in my youth,
Her winters had, forsooth,
Done their worst.

Her locks, as white as snow,
Once sham'd the swarthy crow:
By-and-by
That fowl's avenging sprite
Set his cruel foot for spite
Near her eye.

Her rounded form was lean,
And her silk was bombazine:
Well I wot
With her needles would she sit,
And for hours would she knit, —
Would she not?

Ah, perishable clay!
Her charms had dropp'd away
One by one;

But if she heav'd a sigh
With a burden, it was, "Thy
Will be done."

In travail, as in tears,
With the fardel of her years
Overpast,
In mercy she was borne
Where the weary and the worn
Are at rest.

Oh, if you now are there,
And sweet as once you were,
Grandmamma,
This nether world agrees
'Twill all the better please
Grandpapa.

MATTHEW ARNOLD

(1822–1888.)

THE SICK KING IN BOKHARA.

HUSSEIN.

O MOST just Vizier, send away
The cloth-merchants, and let them be,
Them and their dues, this day: the King
Is ill at ease, and calls for thee.

THE VIZIER.

O merchants, tarry yet a day
Here in Bokhara: but at noon
To-morrow, come, and ye shall pay
Each fortieth web of cloth to me,
As the law is, and go your way.

O Hussein, lead me to the King.
Thou teller of sweet tales, thine own,
Ferdousi's, and the others', lead.
How is it with my lord?

HUSSEIN.

Alone,
Ever since prayer-time, he doth wait,
O Vizier, without lying down,
In the great window of the gate,
Looking into the Registan;
Where through the sellers' booths the slaves
Are this way bringing the dead man.
O Vizier, here is the King's door.

THE KING.

O Vizier, I may bury him?

THE VIZIER.

O King, thou know'st, I have been sick
These many days, and heard no thing,
(For Allah shut my ears and mind)
Not even what thou dost, O King.
Wherefore, that I may counsel thee,
Let Hussein, if thou wilt, make haste
To speak in order what has chanc'd.

THE KING.

O Vizier, be it as thou say'st.

HUSSEIN.

Three days since, at the time of prayer,
A certain Moollah, with his robe
All rent, and dust upon his hair,
Watch'd my lord's coming forth, and push'd

The golden mace-bearers aside,
And fell at the King's feet, and cried:

"Justice, O King, and on myself!
On this great sinner, who hath broke
The law, and by the law must die!
Vengeance, O King!"
But the King spoke:
"What fool is this, that hurts our ears
With folly? or what drunken slave?
My guards, what, prick him with your spears!
Prick me the fellow from the path!"
As the King said so was it done,
And to the mosque my lord pass'd on.

But on the morrow, when the King
Went forth again, the holy book
Carried before him, as is right,
And through the square his path he took;

The man comes running, fleck'd with blood
From yesterday, and falling down
Cries out most earnestly: "O King,
My lord, O King, do right, I pray!

How canst thou, ere thou hear, discern
If I speak folly? but a king,
Whether a thing be great or small,
Like Allah, hears and judges all.

"Wherefore hear thou! Thou know'st, how fierce
In these last days the sun hath burn'd:

That the green water in the tanks
Is to a putrid puddle turn'd:
And the canal, that from the stream
Of Samarcand is brought this way,
Wastes, and runs thinner every day.

"Now I at nightfall had gone forth
Alone, and in a darksome place
Under some mulberry trees I found
A little pool; and in a brief space
With all the water that was there
I fill'd my pitcher, and stole home
Unseen: and having drink to spare,
I hid the can behind the door,
And went up to the roof to sleep.

"But in the night, which was with wind
And burning dust, again I creep
Down, having fever, for a drink.

"Now meanwhile had my brethren found
The water-pitcher where it stood
Behind the door upon the ground,
And call'd my mother: and they all,
As they were thirsty, and the night
Most sultry, drained the pitcher there;
And they sate with it, in my sight,
Their lips still wet, when I came down.

"Now mark! I being fever'd, sick,
(Most unblest also) at that sight
Brake forth, and curs'd them — dost thou hear? —
One was my mother — Now, do right!"

But my lord mus'd a space, and said,
'Send him away, sirs, and make on.
It is some madman," the King said:
As the King said, so was it done.

The morrow at the self-same hour
In the King's path, behold, the man,
Not kneeling, sternly fix'd he stood
Right opposite, and thus began,
Frowning grim down: — "Thou wicked King,
Most deaf where thou should'st most give ear!
What, must I howl in the next world,
Because thou wilt not listen here?

"What, wilt thou pray, and get thee grace,
And all grace shall to me be grudg'd?
Nay but, I swear, from this thy path
I will not stir till I be judg'd."

Then they who stood about the King
Drew close together and conferr'd:
Till that the King stood forth and said,
"Before the priests thou shalt be heard."

But when the Ulemas were met
And the thing heard, they doubted not;
But sentenc'd him, as the law is,
To die by stoning on the spot.

Now the King charg'd us secretly:
"Ston'd must he be, the law stands so:

Yet, if he seek to fly, give way:
Forbid him not, but let him go."

So saying, the King took a stone,
And cast it softly: but the man,
With a great joy upon his face,
Kneel'd down, and cried not, neither ran.

So they, whose lot it was, cast stones;
That they flew thick and bruis'd him sore:
But he prais'd Allah with loud voice,
And remain'd kneeling as before.

My lord had cover'd up his face:
But when one told him, "He is dead,"
Turning him quickly to go in,
"Bring thou to me his corpse," he said.

And truly, while I speak, O King,
I hear the bearers on the stair.
Wilt thou they straightway bring him in?
— Ho! enter ye who tarry there!

THE VIZIER.

O King, in this I praise thee not.
Now must I call thy grief not wise.
Is he thy friend, or of thy blood,
To find such favor in thine eyes?

Nay, were he thine own mother's son,
Still, thou art King, and the law stands.

It were not meet the balance swerv'd,
The sword were broken in thy hands.

But being nothing, as he is,
Why for no cause make sad thy face?
Lo, I am old: three kings, ere thee,
Have I seen reigning in this place.

But who, through all this length of time,
Could bear the burden of his years,
If he for strangers pain'd his heart
Not less than those who merit tears?

Fathers we must have, wife and child;
And grievous is the grief for these:
This pain alone which must be borne,
Makes the head white, and bows the knees.

But other loads than this his own
One man is not well made to bear.
Besides, to each are his own friends,
To mourn with him, and show him care.

Look, this is but a single place,
Though it be great: all the earth round,
If a man bear to have it so,
Things which might vex him might be found.

Upon the Russian frontier, where
The watchers of two armies stand
Near one another, many a man,
Seeking a prey unto his hand,

Hath snatch'd a little fair-haired slave:
They snatch also, towards Merve,
The Shiah dogs, who pasture sheep,
And up from thence to Orgunje.

And these all, laboring for a lord,
Eat not the fruit of their own hands:
Which is the heaviest of all plagues,
To that man's mind, who understands.

The kaffirs also (whom God curse!)
Vex one another, night and day:
There are the lepers, and all sick:
There are the poor who faint alway.

All these have sorrow, and keep still,
Whilst other men make cheer and sing.
Wilt thou have pity on all these?
No, nor on this dead dog, O King!

THE KING.

O Vizier, thou art old, I young.
Clear in these things I cannot see.
My head is burning; and a heat
Is in my skin which angers me.

But hear ye this, ye sons of men!
They that bear rule, and are obey'd,
Unto a rule more strong than theirs
Are in their turn obedient made.

In vain therefore, with wistful eyes
Gazing up hither, the poor man,
Who loiters by the high-heap'd booths,
Below there, in the Registan,

Says, "Happy he, who lodges there!
With silken raiment, store of rice,
And for this drought, all kinds of fruits,
Grape syrup, squares of color'd ice,

"With cherries serv'd in drifts of snow."
In vain hath a king power to build
Houses, arcades, enamell'd mosques;
And to make orchard closes, fill'd

With curious fruit trees, bought from far;
With cisterns for the winter rain;
And in the desert spacious inns
In divers places;—if that pain

Is not more lighten'd, which he feels,
If his will be not satisfied:
And that it be not, from all time
The law is planted, to abide.

Thou wert a sinner, thou poor man!
Thou wert athirst; and didst not see,
That, though we snatch what we desire,
We must not snatch it eagerly.

And I have meat and drink at will,
And rooms of treasures, not a few.
But I am sick, nor heed I these:
And what I would, I cannot do.

Even the great honor which I have,
When I am dead, will soon grow still.
So have I neither joy, nor fame.
But what I can do, that I will.

I have a fretted brick-work tomb
Upon a hill on the right hand,
Hard by a close of apricots,
Upon the road of Samarcand:

Thither, O Vizier, will I bear
This man my pity could not save;
And, plucking up the marble flags,
There lay his body in my grave.

Bring water, lard, and linen rolls.
Wash off all blood, set smooth each limb.
Then say: "He was not wholly vile,
Because a king shall bury him."

THYRSIS.

(A Monody, *to commemorate the author's friend,* Arthur Hugh Clough, *who died at Florence,* 1861.)

OW changed is here each spot man makes or fills!
In the two Hinkseys nothing keeps the same;
The village street its haunted mansion lacks,
And from the sign is gone Sibylla's name,
And from the roofs the twisted chimney-stacks, —
Are ye too changed, ye hills?

See, 'tis no foot of unfamiliar men
To-night from Oxford up your pathway strays!
Here came I often, often, in old days,—
Thyrsis and I: we still had Thyrsis then.

Runs it not here, the track by Childsworth Farm,
Past the high wood, to where the elm-tree crowns
The hill behind whose ridge the sunset flames?
The single elm, that looks on Ilsley Downs,
The Vale, the three lone wears, the youthful Thames?
This winter-eve is warm;
Humid the air; leafless, yet soft as spring,
The tender purple spray on copse and briers;
And that sweet city with her dreaming spires,
She needs not June for beauty's heightening.

Lovely all times she lies, lovely to-night!—
Only, methinks, some loss of habit's power
Befalls me wandering through this upland dim.
Once passed I blindfold here, at any hour;
Now seldom come I, since I came with him.
That single elm-tree bright
Against the west—I miss it! is it gone?
We prized it dearly; while it stood, we said,
Our friend the Gypsy-Scholar was not dead;
While the tree lived, he in these fields lived on.

Too rare, too rare, grow now my visits here,
But once I knew each field, each flower, each stick;
And with the country-folk acquaintance made
By barn in threshing-time, by new-built rick.

Here, too, our shepherd-pipes we first assayed.
Ah me! this many a year
My pipe is lost, my shepherd's-holiday!
Needs must I lose them, needs with heavy heart
Into the world and wave of men depart,
But Thyrsis of his own will went his way.

It irked him to be here, he could not rest.
He loved each simple joy the country yields,
He loved his mates; but yet he could not keep,
For that a shadow lowered on the fields,
Here with the shepherds and the silly sheep.
Some life of men unblest
He knew, which made him droop, and filled his head.
He went; his piping took a troubled sound
Of storms that rage outside our happy ground;
He could not wait their passing; he is dead.

So, some tempestuous morn in early June,
When the year's primal burst of bloom is o'er,
Before the roses and the longest day,—
When garden-walks, and all the grassy floor,
With blossoms red and white of fallen May,
And chestnut-flowers, are strewn,—
So have I heard the cuckoo's parting cry,
From the wet field, through the vexed garden-trees,
Come with the volleying rain and tossing breeze:
The bloom is gone, and with the bloom go I!

Too quick despairer, wherefore wilt thou go?
Soon will the high midsummer pomps come on,
Soon will the musk carnations break and swell,

Soon shall we have gold-dusted snapdragon,
Sweet-william with his homely cottage-smell,
And stocks in fragrant blow;
Roses that down the alleys shine afar,
And open, jasmine-muffled lattices,
And groups under the dreaming garden-trees,
And the full moon, and the white evening-star.

He hearkens not! light comer, he is flown!
What matters it? next year he will return,
And we shall have him in the sweet spring-days,
With whitening hedges, and uncrumpling fern,
And bluebells trembling by the forest-ways,
And scent of hay new-mown.
But Thyrsis never more we swains shall see, —
See him come back, and cut a smoother reed,
And blow a strain the world at last shall heed;
For Time, not Corydon, hath conquered thee!

Alack, for Corydon no rival now! —
But when Sicilian shepherds lost a mate,
Some good survivor with his flute would go,
Piping a ditty sad for Bion's fate;
And cross the unpermitted ferry's flow,
And relax Pluto's brow,
And make leap up with joy the beauteous head
Of Proserpine, among whose crownèd hair
Are flowers first opened on Sicilian air,
And flute his friend, like Orpheus, from the dead.

Oh, easy access to the hearer's grace
When Dorian shepherds sang to Proserpine!

For she herself had trod Sicilian fields,
She knew the Dorian water's gush divine,
She knew each lily white which Enna yields,
Each rose with blushing face;
She loved the Dorian pipe, the Dorian strain.
But ah! of our poor Thames she never heard;
Her foot the Cumner cowslips never stirred;
And we should tease her with our plaint in vain.

Well! wind-dispersed and vain the words will be;
Yet, Thyrsis, let me give my grief its hour
In the old haunt, and find our tree-topped hill!
Who, if not I, for questing here hath power?
I know the wood which hides the daffodil;
I know the Fyfield tree;
I know what white, what purple fritillaries
The grassy harvest of the river-fields,
Above by Ensham, down by Sandford, yields;
And what sedged brooks are Thames's tributaries;

I know these slopes: who knows them if not I?
But many a dingle on the loved hillside,
With thorns once studded, old white-blossomed trees,
Where thick the cowslips grew, and far descried
High towered the spikes of purple orchises,
Hath since our day put by
The coronals of that forgotten time;
Down each green bank hath gone the ploughboy's team,
And only in the hidden brookside gleam
Primroses, orphans of the flowery prime.

Where is the girl who by the boatman's door,
Above the locks, above the boating throng,
Unmoored our skiff when through the Wytham flats,
Red loosestrife and blond meadow-sweet among,
And darting swallows and light water-gnats,
We tracked the shy Thames shore?
Where are the mowers, who, as the tiny swell
Of our boat passing heaved the river-grass,
Stood with suspended scythe to see us pass? —
They all are gone, and thou art gone as well!

Yes, thou art gone! and round me too the night
In ever-nearing circle weaves her shade.
I see her veil draw soft across the day,
I feel her slowly chilling breath invade
The cheek grown thin, the brown hair sprent with gray;
I feel her finger light
Laid pausefully upon life's headlong train, —
The foot less prompt to meet the morning dew,
The heart less bounding at emotion new,
And hope, once crushed, less quick to spring again.

And long the way appears, which seemed so short
To the less-practised eye of sanguine youth;
And high the mountain tops, in cloudy air, —
The mountain tops where is the throne of Truth,
Tops in life's morning-sun so bright and bare!
Unbreachable the fort
Of the long-battered world uplifts its wall;
And strange and vain the earthly turmoil grows,

And near and real the charm of thy repose,
And night as welcome as a friend would fall.

But hush! the upland hath a sudden loss
Of quiet! Look, adown the dusk hillside,
A troop of Oxford hunters going home,
As in old days, jovial and talking, ride!
From hunting with the Berkshire hounds they come.
Quick! let me fly, and cross
Into yon farther field! 'Tis done; and see,
Backed by the sunset, which doth glorify
The orange and pale violet evening-sky,
Bare on its lonely ridge, the Tree! the Tree!

I take the omen! Eve lets down her veil,
The white fog creeps from bush to bush about,
The west unflushes, the high stars grow bright,
And in the scattered farms the lights come out.
I cannot reach the signal-tree to-night,
Yet, happy omen, hail!
Hear it from thy broad lucent Arno-vale
(For there thine earth-forgetting eyelids keep
The morningless and unawakening sleep
Under the flowery oleanders pale);

Hear it, O Thyrsis, still our tree is there!—
Ah, vain! These English fields, this upland dim,
These brambles pale with mist engarlanded,
That lone, sky-pointing tree, are not for him:
To a boon southern country he is fled,
And now in happier air,

Wandering with the great Mother's train divine
(And purer or more subtile soul than thee,
I trow the Mother doth not see)
Within a folding of the Apennine, —

Thou hearest the immortal chants of old!
Putting his sickle to the perilous grain
In the hot cornfield of the Phrygian king,
For thee the Lityerses-song again
Young Daphnis with his silver voice doth sing;
Sings his Sicilian fold,
His sheep, his hapless love, his blinded eyes;
And how a call celestial round him rang,
And heavenward from the fountain-brink he sprang,
And all the marvel of the golden skies.

There thou art gone, and me thou leavest here
Sole in these fields! yet will I not despair.
Despair I will not, while I yet descry
'Neath the soft canopy of English air
That lonely tree against the western sky.
Still, still these slopes, 'tis clear,
Our Gypsy-Scholar haunts, outliving thee!
Fields where soft sheep from cages pull the hay,
Woods with anemones in flower till May,
Know him a wanderer still; then why not me?

A fugitive and gracious light he seeks,
Shy to illumine; and I seek it too.
This does not come with houses or with gold,
With place, with honor, and a flattering crew;

'Tis not in the world's market bought and sold:
But the smooth-slipping weeks
Drop by, and leave its seeker still untired;
Out of the heed of mortals he is gone,
He wends unfollowed, he must house alone;
Yet on he fares, by his own heart inspired.

Thou too, O Thyrsis, on like quest wast bound!
Thou wanderedst with me for a little hour.
Men gave thee nothing; but this happy quest,
If men esteemed thee feeble, gave thee power,
If men procured thee trouble, gave thee rest.
And this rude Cumner ground,
Its fir-topped Hurst, its farms, its quiet fields,
Here cam'st thou in thy jocund youthful time,
Here was thine height of strength, thy golden prime!
And still the haunt beloved a virtue yields.

What though the music of thy rustic flute
Kept not for long its happy, country tone;
Lost it too soon, and learnt a stormy note
Of men contention-tost, of men who groan,
Which tasked thy pipe too sore, and tired thy throat —
It failed, and thou wast mute!
Yet hadst thou alway visions of our light,
And long with men of care thou couldst not stay,
And soon thy foot resumed its wandering way,
Left human haunt, and on alone till night.

Too rare, too rare, grow now my visits here!
Mid city-noise, not, as with thee of yore,

Thyrsis! in reach of sheep-bells is my home.
— Then through the great town's harsh, heart-wearying roar,
Let in thy voice a whisper often come,
To chase fatigue and fear:
Why faintest thou? I wandered till I died.
Roam on! The light we sought is shining still.
Dost thou ask proof? Our tree yet crowns the hill,
Our Scholar travels yet the loved hillside.

THE FORSAKEN MERMAN.

COME, dear children, let us away;
Down and away below!
Now my brothers call from the bay,
Now the great winds shoreward blow,
Now the salt tides seaward flow;
Now the wild white horses play,
Champ and chafe and toss in the spray.
Children dear, let us away!
This way, this way!

Call her once before you go,—
Call once yet!
In a voice that she will know,—
"Margaret! Margaret!"
Children's voices should be dear
(Call once more) to a mother's ear;
Children's voices, wild with pain,—
Surely she will come again!

Call her once, and come away;
This way, this way!
"Mother dear, we cannot stay!
The wild white horses foam and fret."
Margaret! Margaret!

Come, dear children, come away down:
Call no more!
One last look at the white-walled town,
And the little gray church on the windy shore;
Then come down!
She will not come, though you call all day;
Come away, come away!

Children dear, was it yesterday
We heard the sweet bells over the bay,—
In the caverns where we lay,
Through the surf and through the swell,
The far-off sound of a silver bell?
Sand-strewn caverns, cool and deep,
Where the winds are all asleep;
Where the spent lights quiver and gleam,
Where the salt weed sways in the stream,
Where the sea-beasts, ranged all round,
Feed in the ooze of their pasture-ground;
Where the sea-snakes coil and twine,
Dry their mail and bask in the brine;
Where great whales come sailing by,
Sail and sail, with unshut eye,
Round the world for ever and aye?
When did music come this way?
Children dear, was it yesterday?

Children dear, was it yesterday
(Call yet once) that she went away?
Once she sate with you and me,
On a red gold throne in the heart of the sea,
And the youngest sate on her knee.
She combed its bright hair, and she tended it well,
When down swung the sound of a far-off bell.
She sighed, she looked up through the clear green sea;
She said, "I must go, for my kinsfolk pray
In the little gray church on the shore to-day.
'Twill be Easter-time in the world — ah me!
And I lose my poor soul, merman! here with thee."
I said, "Go up, dear heart, through the waves;
Say thy prayer, and come back to the kind sea-caves!"
She smiled, she went up through the surf in the bay.

Children dear, was it yesterday?
Children dear, were we long alone?
"The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan;
Long prayers," I said, "in the world they say;
Come!" I said; and we rose through the surf in the bay.
We went up the beach, by the sandy down
Where the sea-stocks bloom, to the white-walled town;
Through the narrow-paved streets, where all was still,
To the little gray church on the windy hill.
From the church came a murmur of folk at their prayers,
But we stood without in the cold blowing airs.
We climbed on the graves, on the stones worn with rains,

And we gazed up the aisle through the small leaded
panes.
She sate by the pillar; we saw her clear:
"Margaret, hist! come quick, we are here!
Dear heart," I said, "we are long alone;
The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan."
But, ah! she gave me never a look,
For her eyes were sealed to the holy book.
Loud prays the priest; shut stands the door.
Come away, children, call no more!
Come away, come down, call no more!

Down, down, down!
Down to the depths of the sea!
She sits at her wheel in the humming town,
Singing most joyfully.
Hark what she sings: "O joy, O joy,
For the humming street, and the child with its toy!
For the priest, and the bell, and the holy well;
For the wheel where I spun,
And the blessed light of the sun!"
And so she sings her fill,
Singing most joyfully,
Till the spindle drops from her hand,
And the whizzing wheel stands still.
She steals to the window, and looks at the sand,
And over the sand at the sea;
And her eyes are set in a stare;
And anon there breaks a sigh,
And anon there drops a tear,
From a sorrow-clouded eye,
And a heart sorrow-laden,

A long, long sigh,
For the cold strange eyes of a little mermaiden,
And the gleam of her golden hair.

Come away, away, children;
Come, children, come down!
The hoarse wind blows colder;
Lights shine in the town.
She will start from her slumber
When gusts shake the door:
She will hear the winds howling,
Will hear the waves roar.
We shall see, while above us
The waves roar and whirl,
A ceiling of amber,
A pavement of pearl.
Singing, "Here came a mortal,
But faithless was she!
And alone dwell forever
The kings of the sea."

But, children, at midnight,
When soft the winds blow,
When clear falls the moonlight,
When spring-tides are low;
When sweet airs come seaward
From heaths starred with broom,
And high rocks throw mildly
On the blanched sands a gloom;
Up the still, glistening beaches,
Up the creeks we will hie,
Over banks of bright seaweed

The ebb-tide leaves dry.
We will gaze, from the sand-hills,
At the white sleeping town;
At the church on the hill-side,
And then come back down,
Singing, "There dwells a loved one,
But cruel is she!
She left lonely forever
The kings of the sea."

THOMAS BUCHANAN READ

(1822–1872.)

DRIFTING.

MY soul to-day
Is far away,
Sailing the Vesuvian Bay;
My wingëd boat,
A bird afloat,
Swings round the purple peaks remote: —

Round purple peaks
It sails, and seeks
Blue inlets and their crystal creeks,
Where high rocks throw,
Through deeps below,
A duplicated golden glow.

Far, vague, and dim,
The mountains swim;
While on Vesuvius' misty brim,

With outstretched hands,
The gray smoke stands
O'erlooking the volcanic lands.

Here Ischia smiles
O'er liquid miles;
And yonder, bluest of the isles,
Calm Capri waits,
Her sapphire gates
Beguiling to her bright estates.

I heed not, if
My rippling skiff
Float swift or slow from cliff to cliff;
With dreamful eyes
My spirit lies
Under the walls of Paradise.

Under the walls
Where swells and falls
The Bay's deep breast at intervals
At peace I lie,
Blown softly by,
A cloud upon this liquid sky.

The day, so mild,
Is Heaven's own child,
With Earth and Ocean reconciled;
The airs I feel
Around me steal
Are murmuring to the murmuring keel.

Over the rail
My hand I trail
Within the shadow of the sail,
A joy intense,
The cooling sense
Glides down my drowsy indolence.

With dreamful eyes
My spirit lies
Where Summer sings and never dies, —
O'erveiled with vines
She glows and shines
Among her future oil and wines.

Her children, hid
The cliffs amid,
Are gambolling with the gambolling kid;
Or down the walls,
With tipsy calls,
Laugh on the rocks like waterfalls.

The fisher's child,
With tresses wild,
Unto the smooth, bright sand beguiled,
With glowing lips
Sings as she skips,
Or gazes at the far-off ships.

Yon deep bark goes
Where traffic blows,
From lands of sun to lands of snows;

This happier one, —
Its course is run
From lands of snow to lands of sun.

O happy ship,
To rise and dip,
With the blue crystal at your lip!
O happy crew,
My heart with you
Sails, and sails, and sings anew!

No more, no more
The worldly shore
Upbraids me with its loud uproar:
With dreamful eyes
My spirit lies
Under the walls of Paradise!

GEORGE H. BOKER

(1823–1890.)

DIRGE FOR A SOLDIER.

CLOSE his eyes; his work is done!
What to him is friend or foeman,
Rise of moon, or set of sun,
Hand of man, or kiss of woman?
Lay him low, lay him low,
In the clover or the snow!
What cares he? he cannot know:
Lay him low!

As man may, he fought his fight,
Proved his truth by his endeavor;
Let him sleep in solemn night,
Sleep forever and forever.
Lay him low, lay him low,
In the clover or the snow!
What cares he? he cannot know:
Lay him low!

Fold him in his country's stars,
Roll the drum and fire the volley!

What to him are all our wars,
What but death bemocking folly?
Lay him low, lay him low,
In the clover or the snow!
What cares he? he cannot know:
Lay him low!

Leave him to God's watching eye,
Trust him to the hand that made him.
Mortal love weeps idly by:
God alone has power to aid him.
Lay him low, lay him low,
In the clover or the snow!
What cares he? he cannot know:
Lay him low!

SYDNEY DOBELL

(1824–1874.)

HOW'S MY BOY?

"HO, Sailor of the sea!
How's my boy — my boy?"
"What's your boy's name, good wife,
And in what ship sailed he?"

"My boy John —
He that went to sea —
What care I for the ship, sailor?
My boy's my boy to me.

You come back from sea,
And not know my John?
I might as well have asked some landsman
Yonder down in the town.
There's not an ass in all the parish
But he knows my John.

How's my boy — my boy?
And unless you let me know
I'll swear you are no sailor,
Blue Jacket or no,
Brass buttons or no, sailor,
Anchor and crown or no!
Sure his ship was the 'Jolly Briton — '"
"Speak low, woman, speak low!"

"And why should I speak low, sailor,
About my own boy John?
If I was loud as I am proud
I'd sing him over the town!
Why should I speak low, sailor?"
"That good ship went down."

"How's my boy — my boy?
What care I for the ship, sailor,
I was never aboard her?
Be she afloat or be she aground,
Sinking or swimming, I'll be bound
Her owners can afford her!
I say, how's my John?"
"Every man on board went down,
Every man aboard her."

"How's my boy — my boy?
What care I for the men, sailor?
I'm not their mother —
How's my boy — my boy?
Tell me of him and no other!
How's my boy — my boy?"

WILLIAM ALLINGHAM

(1824–1889.)

THE FAIRIES.

UP the airy mountain,
Down the rushy glen,
We daren't go a-hunting
For fear of little men;
Wee folk, good folk,
Trooping all together;
Green jacket, red cap,
And white owl's feather!

Down along the rocky shore
Some make their home —
They live on crispy pancakes
Of yellow tide-foam;
Some in the reeds
Of the black mountain-lake,
With frogs for their watch-dogs,
All night awake.

High on the hill-top
The old king sits;
He is now so old and gray
He's nigh lost his wits.
With a bridge of white mist
Columbkill he crosses,
On his stately journeys
From Slieveleague to Rosses;
Or going up with music
On cold, starry nights,
To sup with the queen
Of the gay Northern Lights.

They stole little Bridget
For seven years long;
When she came down again
Her friends were all gone.
They took her lightly back,
Between the night and morrow;
They thought that she was fast asleep,
But she was dead with sorrow.
They have kept ever since
Deep within the lakes,
On a bed of flag-leaves,
Watching till she wakes.

By the craggy hill-side,
Through the mosses bare,
They have planted thorn-trees
For pleasure here and there.
Is any man so daring
To dig one up in spite,

He shall find the thornies set
In his bed at night.

Up the airy mountain,
Down the rushy glen,
We daren't go a-hunting
For fear of little men;
Wee folk, good folk,
Trooping all together;
Green jacket, red cap,
And white owl's feather!

BAYARD TAYLOR

(1825–1878.)

THE SONG OF THE CAMP.

"GIVE us a song!" the soldiers cried,
The outer trenches guarding,
When the heated guns of the camps allied,
Grew weary of bombarding.

The dark Redan, in silent scoff,
Lay, grim and threatening, under;
And the tawny mound of the Malakoff
No longer belched its thunder.

There was a pause. A guardsman said,
"We storm the forts to-morrow;
Sing while we may, another day
Will bring enough of sorrow."

They lay along the battery's side,
Below the smoking cannon:
Brave hearts, from Severn and from Clyde,
And from the banks of Shannon.

They sang of love, and not of fame;
Forgot was Britain's glory:
Each heart recalled a different name,
But all sang "Annie Laurie."

Voice after voice caught up the song,
Until its tender passion
Rose like an anthem, rich and strong,—
Their battle-eve confession.

Dear girl, her name he dared not speak,
But, as the song grew louder,
Something upon the soldier's cheek
Washed off the stains of powder.

Beyond the darkening ocean burned
The bloody sunset's embers,
While the Crimean valleys learned
How English love remembers.

And once again a fire of hell
Rained on the Russian quarters,
With scream of shot, and burst of shell,
And bellowing of the mortars!

And Irish Nora's eyes are dim
For a singer, dumb and gory;
And English Mary mourns for him
Who sang of "Annie Laurie."

Sleep, soldiers! still in honored rest
Your truth and valor wearing:
The bravest are the tenderest,—
The loving are the daring.

RICHARD H. STODDARD

(1825– .)

THE ABDICATION OF NOMAN.

NOMAN, the King of Hira, sat one day
In his pavilion, pitched at Karwanak,
With Bahram Gour, the son of Yezdejird,
And Adi Ibn Zeid, the Persian bard.
Cross-legged on scarlet cushions stuffed with down
They sat and smoked; the bubbling of their pipes
Was like a river in the land of sleep.
The curtain of the tent was drawn aside,
Looped up with golden cords; a twinkling gleam
Glanced from the tassels, smote the water-bowls,
And perished in the great sea-emerald
On Noman's turban: other light was none;
They lolled away the hours in purple dusk.

Before the doorway of the tent they saw
The palace park and garden bright with spring.
A pillared avenue of stately palms
Slept in the sun; a fountain rose and fell,
Breaking the silver surface at its base;
Gold-fish like sunken ingots lay in heaps
Beneath the fountain's rain; beside its rim,
Dipping his long bill in a lotus cup,

A black crane stooped; between the silent palms
A length of silken carpet was unrolled:
A white gazelle dangled a silver chain,
Picking its way through tufts of broidered flowers.
Flowers of all hues and odors streaked the ground,
Roses, fire-red, large tulips, cups of flame,
Banks of snow lilies turning dew to pearls,
And rolling rivers of anemonies,
The flowers that Noman loved; their crimson leaves
Were rubies set on stalks of emerald.
Broad meadows stretched afar wherein, dim-seen
Through winking haze, the still Euphrates lay —
The great Euphrates fresh from Babylon.

Between their whiffs of smoke with happy eyes
They drank the landscape in; to Bahram Gour
It grew his father's garden at Madain —
Save that the Emir's daughter was not there,
Whereat he sighed: his long beard Adi stroked,
And thrummed his idle fingers in the air,
Turning a couplet in his tuneful brain,
Noman alone was sad, for he nor had
The poet's idleness, nor prince's youth;
Grown gray in troubled rule he longed for rest,
But found it never: fair things made him grieve,
Because their lives are short. He saw the end.

"Why grasp at wealth and power? Why hoard up gold?
Or make our whims a law for other men?
Earth hides her gold in veinèd rocks and hills,
Packs it in river sands: we dig it out,

And stamp our Kingly faces in its light,
And call it ours. Does Earth give up her claim?
Not she, she calmly waits, and takes it back.
We sift the sands, dive down into the waves,
Ransack the caves for gems; Earth gives them up.
I have a hundred caskets full of pearls,
Ten chests of chrysolites, a turquoise plate
That holds a maund of corn, a chandelier,
The chains whereof are beryls linked with gold,
Its flame a ruby, found in Balashan.
Not mine, but Earth's; for I shall pass away,
I, and my race, but Earth will still remain,
And keep my gems; in palaces like mine,
To swell the treasury of future Kings,
Or, haply, in the caverns where they grew.

We build rich palaces, and wall them in,
Make parks and gardens near, plant trees, sow flowers,
And say, 'All this is ours!' But what says Earth?
She only smiles her still cold smile of scorn.
Forests a thousand parasangs in length
Are hers, and hers the tropic's zone of bloom,
And when we die our marble palaces —
She lets the jackal prowl about their courts.

My days have numbered five and sixty years,
Twenty and eight were passed upon the throne:
I count them lost. I may have gained some power,
Added a few wild tribes to those I rule,
And treasures to my treasure, but my life
(I had so little time to think of that)

Is not a whit the richer, save in cares.
Ah, who that knows himself would be a King?"

So spake the King the secret of his heart,
Like one who babbles to himself alone.
His head dropped on his bosom, and his beard
Hung in his lap: the shadow of his words
Drifted across the stream of Adi's thought,
And when the King had ended he began:

"Name me the King whose power was vast enough
To cope with Death, or cheat the Sepulchre.
Whither is Chosroes gone, the mightiest, he,
Of Persian Kings? Whither did Sapor go?
And they, the fair-haired race, the Roman lords —
Tell me why no memorial lives of them.
And he, the nameless King, who Hadhr built,
Where Khabur and the lordly Tigris flow.
He faced his palace walks with marble slabs,
Polished and white, and raised his roof so high,
His ridgy roofs, the birds made nests thereon,
The thought of dying never crossed his mind,
But not the less he died, and died alone;
For when Death came to that unhappy King
The very sentinels had fled his gates."

"The end of all things must be near at hand,"
Said Bahram Gour, half earnest, half in jest,
"For lo, the world hath now two Solomons,
Whose wisdom is compressed in three small words,
The knell of Folly, 'All is Vanity!'
It may be so, my dear philosophers,

But are you free from blame? What says the song?
'It is my sight that fails me, not the rose
That waxes pale; my scent that is too coarse,
No lack of odor in the heavenly musk,'
Cry down the world who will, but Bahram Gour
Will love it still." "And I," the poet said,
His fancied sadness dying with the words
That gave it birth, "and never more than now,
When to the quiet tent and drowsy pipe
Succeeds the eager life on flying steeds."

From out their marble stalls the dusky grooms
Led forth the royal stud of milk-white mares.
The falconers came next with hooded birds,
Each with a silver label on its leg;
And then the keepers with the beasts of chase
In chains, lithe panthers, and keen-scented dogs,
Tigers, whose tawny hides are mapped with black,
And lions trained to hunt, — the white gazelle
Fled from their cruel eyes to Noman's tent.
Slowly like one who wills away a dream,
Lifting his head the King called home his thoughts.
He saw the trembling creature at his feet,
And fondled it; the voice of Adi's lute,
Wooing a song, brought Adi to his mind,
The jingling of a scabbard Bahram Gour;
Adi still sat and smoked, but Bahram Gour
Had risen, and was girding on his sword.
"My sombre fancies led me from the chase;
But now that I have found myself once more
Let us depart at once. They wait for us."
He beckoned, and the grooms led up their steeds.

Between the palms whose shadows struck their brows,
Launching across the carpet's bed of flowers,
Around the fountain's glittering mist they rode.
The fretful panthers snuffed, and tugged their chains,
The calmer lions, quiet in their strength,
Strode on, and dragged their keepers after them.
Not far from Hira by the river's side,
Where stood a ruined city was a tomb,
Between the river and the tomb were trees
Whose twinkling leaves were shaken by the wind.
Dropping the hunt before the game was roused
Thither the King and poet rode alone;
They saw the shaken boughs, but felt no wind.
"The leaves are tongues," said Noman, "and they speak,
With some grave message charged, or prophecy.
You read the hidden meaning of the flowers,
Can you expound the language of the trees?"

"Many have here dismounted from their steeds
And kneeling camels in the days of old;
Have slaked their thirst with wine beneath our shade,
And led their camels to the limpid tide.
They strained their shining wine from precious flasks,
They tossed the splendid trappings of their steeds;
Gayly they lived, the pensioners of Time:
But ere life's noon they died, cut off by Fate.
Their ashes drift and waste like withered leaves,
Blown by the east wind now, now by the west."
So spake the trees to Adi. So he spake.

"All things are in a league with my grave thoughts
To make me think of death," replied the King.

"If leaves whose little lives of sun and dew
Last not the year out say that man is dust,
What must the dust, where men by millions sleep,
The dead of ages, say?" The poet stooped,
And scooped his two hands full of dry white dust,
And held it to his ear. "Interpret it."
"Know that the dust was once a man like thee,
Know, too, that thou wilt one day be but dust."
So spake the dust to Adi. So he spake.

"The words are changed," said Noman, "not the tune,
For that still urges man's mortality.
When man forgets his end, nor earth nor heaven
Can hold their peace. The tomb remains to speak.
I go to question that. Wait for me here.
Fear not to see me enter its dark walls;
The time will come when they will shut me in
Forever: now I shall return again."
He waved the poet back, and throwing wide
Its mouldering doors went down into the tomb.

Before the place a watchful sentinel
The poet paced his beat with noiseless steps,
Hearkening the while to catch the King's least call.
He heard the talking leaves above his head,
The river rippling on the sandy shore,
But not the King; the grass was growing thick
Around the tomb, but where the mares were hitched
It grew not; cutting with his sword a swath,
He bore an armful to the hungry mares:
But still the King nor called to him, nor came.

At last the fiery arrows of the noon
Drove back the lessening shadows of the trees,
And hemmed them in a circle round their trunks;
To this the bard retreated from the heat.
The happy light came down upon his heart,
And stretched at ease he sang a summer song.

"The morning moon is set, the stars are gone;
Beside the palace gate the peacocks strut,
And in the tank the early lotus wakes.

The dew fell all night long, and drenched my robe,
The nightingale complained to me, in vain:
I waited for the dawn to meet my love.
She stands before me in the garden walk,
Her blue robe bordered with a fringe of pearls;
She offers me a rose; I kneel to her.

'Nay, speak not yet, though all your words are pearls;
Your smiles outrun your speech, and greet me first:
But when you smile not, speak, or I shall die!
I kiss the rose, — I would it were your lips!
But wherefore? Such a kiss would end my days.
Pity me, Sweet, my heart is at your feet!'

My long black hair is streaked with silver threads,
Tears dim my eyes; yet still in thought I see
The Rose of Beauty in the garden walk.

She sleeps the long, long sleep; disturb her not.
O nightingales, be silent, or depart:
And thou, my heart, be still, or moan and break."

The river rippled louder, but the leaves
Crowding together whispered, and the clash
Shook one at Adi's feet: the dust was stirred.
He raised his eyes, and lo, a cloud of dust
Blown from the clattering hoofs of flying steeds,
He knew the milk-white mares, and knew the troop
That rode them — Noman's huntsmen; Bahram Gour
Trailing his spear rode wildly at their head.
"The King is lost," he shouted as he came:
"Not so," said Adi, pointing to the tomb,
"The King is there. He muses in the tomb,
Perchance he sleeps. I would have shared his dreams,
But he forbade, and made me wait him here."
Then Bahram Gour went down into the tomb,
To wake the King, and many of the lords
Went with him; those who stayed behind were hushed.
They heard the talking leaves above their heads,
The river rippling on the sandy shore,
But not the King. At length a voice was heard —
"*The King is dead!*" and Bahram Gour came out
Bearing a lifeless body in his arms.

THERE ARE GAINS FOR ALL OUR LOSSES.

THERE are gains for all our losses —
There are balms for all our pain;
But when youth, the dream, departs,
It takes something from our hearts,
And it never comes again.

We are stronger and are better,
Under manhood's sterner reign;
Still we feel that something sweet
Followed youth, with flying feet,
And will never come again.

Something beautiful has vanished,
And we sigh for it in vain;
We behold it everywhere,
On the earth, and in the air,
But it never comes again.

BIRDS.

BIRDS are singing round my window,
Tunes the sweetest ever heard,
And I hang my cage there daily,
But I never catch a bird.

So with thoughts my brain is peopled,
And they sing there all day long:
But they will not fold their pinions
In the little cage of Song!

LUCY LARCOM

(1826–1893.)

HANNAH BINDING SHOES.

POOR lone Hannah,
Sitting at the window, binding shoes:
Faded, wrinkled,
Sitting, stitching, in a mournful muse.
Bright-eyed beauty once was she,
When the bloom was on the tree:
Spring and winter,
Hannah's at the window, binding shoes.

Not a neighbor,
Passing nod or answer will refuse,
To her whisper,
"Is there from the fishers any news?"
Oh, her heart's adrift, with one
On an endless voyage gone!
Night and morning,
Hannah's at the window, binding shoes.

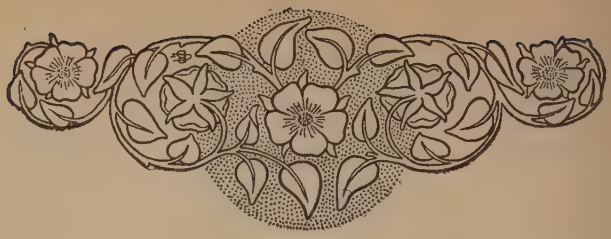
Fair young Hannah,
Ben, the sunburnt fisher, gayly wooes:

Hale and clever,
For a willing heart and hand he sues.
May-day skies are all aglow,
And the waves are laughing so!
For her wedding
Hannah leaves her window and her shoes.

May is passing:
Mid the apple boughs a pigeon cooes.
Hannah shudders,
For the mild southwester mischief brews.
Round the rocks of Marblehead,
Outward bound, a schooner sped:
Silent, lonesome,
Hannah's at the window, binding shoes.

'Tis November,
Now no tear her wasted cheek bedews.
From Newfoundland
Not a sail returning will she lose,
Whispering hoarsely, "Fishermen,
Have you, have you heard of Ben?"
Old with watching,
Hannah's at the window, binding shoes.

Twenty winters
Bleach and tear the ragged shore she views.
Twenty seasons: —
Never one has brought her any news.
Still her dim eyes silently
Chase the white sails o'er the sea:
Hopeless, faithful,
Hannah's at the window, binding shoes.



THE ROSE ENTHRONED.

IT melts and seethes, the chaos that shall grow
To adamant beneath the house of life;
In hissing hatred atoms clash, and go
To meet intenser strife.

And ere the fever leaves the granite veins,
Down thunders over them a torrid sea:
Now Flood, now Fire, alternate despot reigns,
Immortal foes to be.

Built by the warring elements, they rise,
The massive earth-foundations, tier on tier,
Where slimy monsters with unhuman eyes
Their hideous heads uprear.

The building of the world is not for you,
That glare upon each other, and devour:
Race floating after race fades out of view,
Till beauty springs from power.

Meanwhile from crumbling rocks and shoals of death
Shoots up rank verdure to the hidden sun;
The gulfs are eddying to the vague, sweet breath
Of richer life begun;

Richer and sweeter far than aught before,
Though rooted in the grave of what has been:
Unnumbered burials yet must heap Earth's floor
Ere she her heir shall win;

And ever nobler lives and deaths more grand,
For nourishment of that which is to come;
While mid the ruins of the work she planned
Sits Nature, blind and dumb.

For whom or what she plans, she knows no more
Than any mother of her unborn child:
Yet beautiful forewarnings murmur o'er
Her desolations wild.

Slowly the clamor and the clash subside;
Earth's restlessness her patient hopes subdue;
Mild oceans shoreward heave a pulse-like tide;
The skies are veined with blue.

But life works through the growing quietness,
To bring some darling mystery into form:
Beauty her fairest Possible would dress
In colors pure and warm.

Within the depths of palpitating seas
A tender tint, — anon a line of grace,
Some lovely thought from its dull atom frees,
The coming joy to trace: —

A pencilled moss on tablets of the sand
Such as shall veil the unbudded maiden-blush

Of beauty yet to gladden the green land; —
A breathing, through the hush,

Of some sealed perfume longing to burst out,
And give its prisoned rapture to the air; —
A brooding hope, a promise through a doubt,
Is whispered everywhere.

And, every dawn a shade more clear, the skies
A flush as from the heart of heaven disclose:
Through earth and sea and air a message flies,
Prophetic of the Rose.

At last a morning comes, of sunshine still,
When not a dewdrop trembles on the grass,
When all winds sleep, and every pool and rill
Is like a burnished glass.

Where a long looked-for guest might lean to gaze;
When Day on Earth rests royally, — a crown
Of molten glory, flashing diamond rays,
From heaven let lightly down.

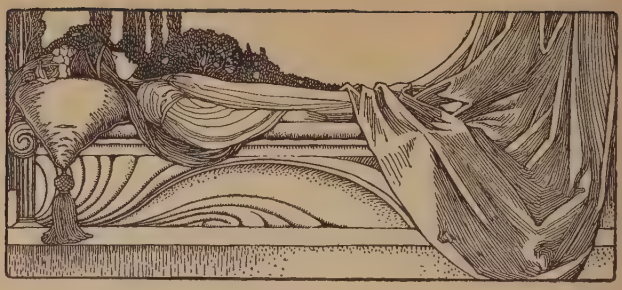
In golden silence, breathless, all things stand;
What answer waits this questioning repose?
A sudden gush of light and odors bland,
And, lo, — the Rose! the Rose!

The birds break into canticles around;
The winds lift Jubilate to the skies;
For, twin-born with the rose on Eden-ground,
Love blooms in human eyes.

Life's marvellous queen-flower blossoms only so,
In dust of low ideals rooted fast.
Ever the Beautiful is moulded slow
From truth in errors past.

What fiery fields of Chaos must be won,
What battling Titans rear themselves a tomb,
What births and resurrections greet the sun
Before the rose can bloom!

And of some wonder-blossom yet we dream
Whereof the time that is infolds the seed;
Some flower of light, to which the Rose shall seem
A fair and fragile weed.



DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

(1828–1882.)

THE BALLAD OF DEAD LADIES.

Translation from François Villon, 1450.

TELL me now in what hidden way is
Lady Flora the lovely Roman?
Where's Hipparchia, and where is Thais,
Neither of them the fairer woman?
Where is Echo, beheld of no man,
Only heard on river and mere,—
She who's beauty was more than human? . . .
But where are the snows of yester-year?

Where's Héloise, the learned nun,
For whose sake Abelard, I ween,
Lost manhood and put priesthood on?
(From Love he won such dule and teen!)
And where, I pray you, is the Queen
Who will'd that Buridan should steer
Sew'd in a sack's mouth down the Seine? . . .
But where are the snows of yester-year?

White Queen Blanche, like a queen of lilies,
With a voice like any mermaiden, —
Bertha Broadfoot, Beatrice, Alice,
And Ermengarde the lady of Maine, —
And that good Joan whom Englishmen
At Rouen doom'd and burn'd her there, —
Mother of God, where are they then? . . .
But where are the snows of yester-year?

Nay, never ask this week, fair lord,
Where they are gone, nor yet this year,
Save with thus much for an overword, —
But where are the snows of yester-year?

ASPECTA MEDUSA.

ANDROMEDA, by Perseus saved and wed,
Hankered each day to see the Gorgon's head:
Till o'er a fount he held it, bade her lean,
And mirrored in the wave was safely seen
That death she lived by.

Let not thine eyes know
Any forbidden thing itself, although
It once should save as well as kill: but be
Its shadow upon life enough for thee.

THE BLESSED DAMOZEL.

THE blessed damozel lean'd out
From the gold bar of Heaven;
Her eyes were deeper than the depth
Of waters still'd at even;
She had three lilies in her hand,
And the stars in her hair were seven.

Her robe, ungirt from clasp to hem,
No wrought flowers did adorn,
But a white rose of Mary's gift,
For service meetly worn;
Her hair that lay along her back
Was yellow like ripe corn.

Herseem'd she scarce had been a day
One of God's choristers;
The wonder was not yet quite gone
From that still look of hers;
Albeit, to them she left, her day
Had counted as ten years.

(To one, it is ten years of years.
. . . Yet now, and in this place,
Surely she lean'd o'er me — her hair
Fell all about my face. . . .
Nothing: the autumn-fall of leaves.
The whole year sets apace.)

It was the rampart of God's house
That she was standing on:
By God built over the sheer depth
The which is Space begun;
So high, that looking downward thence
She scarce could see the sun.

It lies in Heaven, across the flood
Of ether, as a bridge.
Beneath, the tides of day and night
With flame and darkness ridge
The void, as low as where this earth
Spins like a fretful midge.

Around her, lovers, newly met
Mid deathless love's acclaims,
Spoke evermore among themselves
Their heart-remember'd names;
And the souls mounting up to God
Went by her like thin flames.

And still she bow'd herself and stoop'd
Out of the circling charm;
Until her bosom must have made
The bar she lean'd on warm,
And the lilies lay as if asleep
Along her bended arm.

From the fix'd place of Heaven she saw
Time like a pulse shake fierce
Through all the worlds. Her gaze still strove
Within the gulf to pierce

Its path; and now she spoke as when
The stars sang in their spheres.

The sun was gone now; the curl'd moon
Was like a little feather
Fluttering far down the gulf; and now
She spoke through the still weather.
Her voice was like the voice the stars
Had when they sang together.

(Ah sweet! Even now, in that bird's song,
Strove not her accents there,
Fain to be hearken'd? When those bells
Possess'd the mid-day air,
Strove not her steps to reach my side
Down all the echoing stair?)

"I wish that he were come to me,
For he will come," she said.
"Have I not pray'd in Heaven? — on earth,
Lord, Lord, has he not pray'd?
Are not two prayers a perfect strength?
And shall I feel afraid?

When round his head the aureole clings,
And he is cloth'd in white,
I'll take his hand and go with him
To the deep wells of light;
As unto a stream we will step down,
And bathe there in God's sight.

We two will stand beside that shrine,
Occult, withheld, untrod,

Whose lamps are stirr'd continually
With prayer sent up to God;
And see our old prayers, granted, melt
Each like a little cloud.

We two will lie i' the shadow of
That living mystic tree
Within whose secret growth the Dove
Is sometimes felt to be,
While every leaf that His plumes touch
Saith His Name audibly.

And I myself will teach to him,
I myself, lying so,
The songs I sing here; which his voice
Shall pause in, hush'd and slow,
And find some knowledge at each pause,
Or some new thing to know."

(Alas! we two, we two, thou say'st!
Yea, one wast thou with me
That once of old. But shall God lift
To endless unity
The soul whose likeness with thy soul
Was but its love for thee?)

"We two," she said, "will seek the groves
Where the lady Mary is,
With her five handmaidens, whose names
Are five sweet symphonies,
Cecily, Gertrude, Magdalen,
Margaret and Rosalys.

Circlewise sit they, with bound locks
And foreheads garlanded;
Into the fine cloth white like flame
Weaving the golden thread,
To fashion the birth-robes for them
Who are just born, being dead.

He shall fear, haply, and be dumb:
Then will I lay my cheek
To his, and tell about our love,
Not once abash'd or weak:
And the dear Mother will approve
My pride, and let me speak.

Herself shall bring us, hand in hand,
To Him round whom all souls
Kneel, the clear-ranged unnumber'd heads
Bow'd with their aureoles:
And angels meeting us shall sing
To their citherns and citoles.

There will I ask of Christ the Lord
Thus much for him and me: —
Only to live as once on earth
With Love, — only to be,
As then awhile, forever now
Together, I and he."

She gazed and listen'd and then said,
Less sad of speech than mild, —
"All this is when he comes." She ceas'd.
The light thrill'd towards her, fill'd

With angels in strong level flight.
Her eyes pray'd, and she smil'd.

(I saw her smile.) But soon their path
Was vague in distant spheres:
And then she cast her arms along
The golden barriers,
And laid her face between her hands,
And wept. (I heard her tears.)

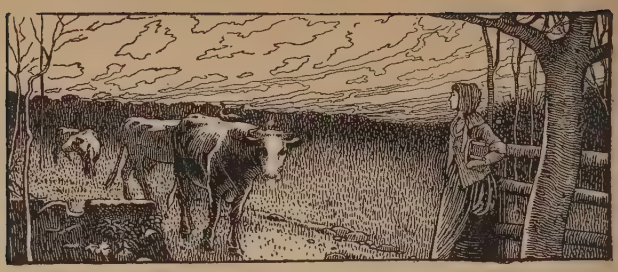
THE WOODSPURGE.

THE wind flapp'd loose, the wind was still,
Shaken out dead from tree and hill:
I had walk'd on at the wind's will,—
I sat now, for the wind was still.

Between my knees my forehead was,—
My lips, drawn in, said not Alas!
My hair was over in the grass,
My naked ears heard the day pass.

My eyes, wide open, had the run
Of some ten weeds to fix upon;
Among those few, out of the sun,
The woodspurge flower'd, three cups in one.

From perfect grief there need not be
Wisdom or even memory:
One thing then learnt remains to me,—
The woodspurge has a cup of three.



JEAN INGELOW

(1830–1897.)

THE HIGH TIDE ON THE COAST OF LINCOLNSHIRE.

(1571.)

THE old mayor climb'd the belfry tower,
The ringers ran by two, by three;
"Pull, if ye never pull'd before;
Good ringers, pull your best," quoth he.
"Play uppe, play uppe, O Boston bells!
Ply all your changes, all your swells,
Play uppe, 'The Brides of Enderby.'"

Men say it was a stolen tyde —
The Lord that sent it, He knows all;
But in myne ears doth still abide
The message that the bells let fall:
And there was nought of strange, beside
The flight of mews and peewits pied
By millions crouch'd on the old sea wall.

I sat and spun within the doore,
My thread brake off, I rais'd myne eyes;

The level sun, like ruddy ore,
Lay sinking in the barren skies;
And dark against day's golden death
She moved where Lindis wandereth,
My sonne's faire wife, Elizabeth.

"Cusha! Cusha! Cusha!" calling,
Ere the early dews were falling,
Farre away I heard her song,
"Cusha! Cusha! Cusha!" all along;
Where the reedy Lindis floweth,
Floweth, floweth,
From the meads where melick groweth
Faintly came her milking song—

"Cusha! Cusha! Cusha!" calling,
"For the dews will soone be falling;
Leave your meadow grasses mellow,
Mellow, mellow;
Quit your cowslips, cowslips yellow;
Come uppe, Whitefoot, come uppe, Lightfoot;
Quit the stalks of parsley hollow,
Hollow, hollow;
Come up, Jetty, rise and follow,
From the clovers lift your head;
Come uppe, Whitefoot, come uppe, Lightfoot,
Come uppe, Jetty, rise and follow,
Jetty, to the milking shed."

If it be long, ay, long ago,
When I beginne to think howe long,
Againe I hear the Lindis flow,
Swift as an arrowe, sharpe and strong;

And all the aire, it seemeth mee,
Bin full of floating bells (sayth shee),
That ring the tune of Enderby.

Alle fresh the level pasture lay,
And not a shadowe mote be seene,
Save where full fyve good miles away
The steeple tower'd from out the greene;
And lo! the great bell farre and wide
Was heard in all the country side
That Saturday at eventide.

The swanherds where their sedges are
Moved on in sunset's golden breath,
The shepherde lads I heard afarre,
And my sonne's wife, Elizabeth;
Till floating o'er the grassy sea
Came downe that kyndly message free,
The "Brides of Mavis Enderby."

Then some look'd uppe into the sky,
And all along where Lindis flows
To where the goodly vessels lie,
And where the lordly steeple shows.
They sayde, "And why should this thing be?
What danger lowers by land or sea?
They ring the tune of Enderby!

"For evil news from Mablethorpe,
Of pyrate galleys warping down;
For shippes ashore beyond the scorpe,
They have not spar'd to wake the towne:

But while the west bin red to see,
And storms be none, and pyrates flee,
Why ring 'The Brides of Enderby'?"

I look'd without, and lo! my sonne
Came riding downe with might and main:
He rais'd a shout as he drew on,
Till all the welkin rang again,
"Elizabeth! Elizabeth!"
(A sweeter woman ne'er drew breath
Than my sonne's wife, Elizabeth.)

"The olde sea wall (he cried) is downe,
The rising tide comes on apace,
And boats adrift in yonder towne
Go sailing uppe the market-place."
He shook as one that looks on death:
"God save you, mother!" straight he saith;
"Where is my wife, Elizabeth?"

"Good sonne, where Lindis winds her way,
With her two bairns I marked her long;
And ere yon bells beganne to play
Afar I heard her milking song."
He looked across the grassy lea,
To right, to left, "Ho, Enderby!"
They rang "The Brides of Enderby!"

With that he cried and beat his breast;
For lo! along the river's bed
A mighty eygre rear'd his crest,
And uppe the Lindis raging sped.

It swept with thunderous noises loud;
Shap'd like a curling snow-white cloud,
Or like a demon in a shroud.

And rearing Lindis backward press'd
  Shook all her trembling bankes amaine;
Then madly at the eygre's breast
  Flung uppe her weltering walls again.
Then bankes came downe with ruin and rout —
Then beaten foam flew round about —
Then all the mighty floods were out.

So farre, so fast the eygre drave,
  The heart had hardly time to beat
Before a shallow seething wave
  Sobb'd in the grasses at oure feet:
The feet had hardly time to flee
Before it brake against the knee,
And all the world was in the sea.

Upon the roofe we sate that night,
  The noise of bells went sweeping by;
I mark'd the lofty beacon light
  Stream from the church tower, red and high —
A lurid mark and dread to see;
And awsome bells they were to mee,
That in the dark rang "Enderby."

They rang the sailor lads to guide
  From roofe to roofe who fearless row'd;
And I — my sonne was at my side,
And yet the ruddy beacon glow'd:

And yet he moan'd beneath his breath,
"O come in life, or come in death!
O lost! my love, Elizabeth!"

And didst thou visit him no more?
Thou didst, thou didst, my daughter deare;
The waters laid thee at his doore,
Ere yet the early dawn was clear.
Thy pretty bairns in fast embrace,
The lifted sun shone on thy face,
Downe drifted to thy dwelling-place.

That flow strew'd wrecks about the grass,
That ebbe swept out the flocks to sea;
A fatal ebbe and flow, alas!
To manye more than myne and mee;
But each will mourn his own (she saith);
And sweeter woman ne'er drew breath
Than my sonne's wife, Elizabeth.

I shall never hear her more
By the reedy Lindis shore,
"Cusha! Cusha! Cusha!" calling,
Ere the early dews be falling;
I shall never hear her song,
"Cusha! Cusha!" all along
Where the sunny Lindis floweth,
Goeth, floweth;
From the meads where melick groweth,
When the water winding down,
Onward floweth to the town.

I shall never see her more
Where the reeds and rushes quiver,
Shiver, quiver;
Stand beside the sobbing river,
Sobbing, throbbing, in its falling
To the sandy lonesome shore;
I shall never hear her calling,
"Leave your meadow grasses mellow,
Mellow, mellow;
Quit your cowslips, cowslips yellow;
Come uppe, Whitefoot, come uppe, Lightfoot,
Quit your pipes of parsley hollow,
Hollow, hollow;
Come uppe, Lightfoot, rise and follow;
Lightfoot, Whitefoot,
From your clovers lift the head;
Come uppe, Jetty, follow, follow,
Jetty, to the milking shed."

THE LONG WHITE SEAM.

AS I came round the harbor buoy,
The lights began to gleam,
No wave the land-locked water stirred,
The crags were white as cream;
And I marked my love by candle-light
Sewing her long white seam.

It's aye sewing ashore, my dear,
Watch and steer at sea,
It's reef and furl, and haul the line,
Set sail and think of thee.

I climbed to reach her cottage door;
O sweetly my love sings!
Like a shaft of light her voice breaks forth,
My soul to meet it springs
As the shining water leaped of old,
When stirred by angel wings.
Aye longing to list anew,
Awake and in my dream,
But never a song she sang like this,
Sewing her long white seam.

Fair fall the lights, the harbor lights,
That brought me in to thee,
And peace drop down on that low roof
For the sight that I did see,
And the voice, my dear, that rang so clear,
All for the love of me.
For O, for O, with brows bent low
By the candle's flickering gleam,
Her wedding gown it was she wrought,
Sewing the long white seam.

SONGS OF SEVEN.

SEVEN TIMES ONE. EXULTATION.

THERE'S no dew left on the daisies and clover,
There's no rain left in heaven:
I've said my "seven times" over and over,
Seven times one are seven.

I am old, so old, I can write a letter;
My birthday lessons are done;
The lambs play always, they know no better;
They are only one times one.

O moon! in the night I have seen you sailing
And shining so round and low;
You were bright! ah, bright! but your light is failing, —
You are nothing now but a bow.

You moon, have you done something wrong in heaven
That God has hidden your face?
I hope if you have you will soon be forgiven,
And shine again in your place.

O velvet bee, you're a dusty fellow,
You've powdered your legs with gold!
O brave marsh marybuds, rich and yellow,
Give me your money to hold!

O columbine, open your folded wrapper,
Where two twin turtle-doves dwell!
O cuckoopint, toll me the purple clapper
That hangs in your clear green bell!

And show me your nest with the young ones in it;
I will not steal them away;
I am old! you may trust me, linnet, linnet —
I am seven times one to-day.

SEVEN TIMES TWO. ROMANCE.

You bells in the steeple, ring, ring out your changes,
How many soever they be,
And let the brown meadow-lark's note as he ranges
Come over, come over to me.

Yet birds' clearest carol by fall or by swelling
No magical sense conveys,
And bells have forgotten their old art of telling
The fortune of future days.

"Turn again, turn again," once they rang cheerily,
While a boy listened alone;
Made his heart yearn again, musing so wearily
All by himself on a stone.

Poor bells! I forgive you; your good days are over,
And mine, they are yet to be;
No listening, no longing shall aught, aught discover:
You leave the story to me.

The foxglove shoots out of the green matted heather,
Preparing her hoods of snow;
She was idle, and slept till the sunshiny weather:
O, children take long to grow.

I wish and I wish that the spring would go faster,
Nor long summer bide so late;

And I could grow on like the foxglove and aster,
For some things are ill to wait.

I wait for the day when dear hearts shall discover,
While dear hands are laid on my head;
"The child is a woman, the book may close over,
For all the lessons are said."

I wait for my story — the birds cannot sing it,
Not one, as he sits on the tree;
The bells cannot ring it, but long years, O bring it!
Such as I wish it to be.

SEVEN TIMES THREE. LOVE.

I leaned out of window, I smelt the white clover,
Dark, dark was the garden, I saw not the gate;
"Now, if there be footsteps, he comes, my one lover —
Hush, nightingale, hush! O, sweet nightingale, wait
Till I listen and hear
If a step draweth near,
For my love he is late!

The skies in the darkness stoop nearer and nearer,
A cluster of stars hangs like fruit in the tree,
The fall of the water comes sweeter, comes clearer:
To what art thou listening, and what dost thou see?
Let the star-clusters grow,
Let the sweet waters flow,
And cross quickly to me.

You night moths that hover where honey brims over
From sycamore blossoms, or settle or sleep;

You glowworms, shine out, and the pathway discover
To him that comes darkling along the rough steep.
Ah, my sailor, make haste,
For the time runs to waste,
And my love lieth deep —

Too deep for swift telling; and yet, my one lover,
I've conned thee an answer, it waits thee to-night."
By the sycamore passed he, and through the white clover,
Then all the sweet speech I had fashioned took flight;
But I'll love him more, more
Than e'er wife loved before,
Be the days dark or bright.

SEVEN TIMES FOUR. MATERNITY.

Heigh ho! daisies and buttercups,
Fair yellow daffodils, stately and tall!
When the wind wakes how they rock in the grasses,
And dance with the cuckoo-buds slender and small!
Here's two bonny boys, and here's mother's own lasses,
Eager to gather them all.

Heigh ho! daisies and buttercups!
Mother shall thread them a daisy chain;
Sing them a song of the pretty hedge sparrow,
That loved her brown little ones, loved them full fain;
Sing, "Heart, thou art wide though the house be but narrow" —
Sing once, and sing it again.

Heigh ho! daisies and buttercups,
Sweet wagging cowslips, they bend and they bow;

A ship sails afar over warm ocean waters,
And haply one musing doth stand at her prow.
O bonny brown sons, and O sweet little daughters,
Maybe he thinks on you now!

Heigh ho! daisies and buttercups,
Fair yellow daffodils, stately and tall!
A sunshiny world full of laughter and leisure,
And fresh hearts unconscious of sorrow and thrall!
Send down on their pleasure smiles passing its measure,
God that is over us all!

SEVEN TIMES FIVE. WIDOWHOOD.

I sleep and rest, my heart makes moan
Before I am well awake;
"Let me bleed! O let me alone,
Since I must not break!"

For children wake, though fathers sleep
With a stone at foot and at head:
O sleepless God, for ever keep,
Keep both living and dèad!

I lift mine eyes, and what to see
But a world happy and fair!
I have not wished it to mourn with me—
Comfort is not there.

O what anear but golden brooms,
And a waste of reedy rills!
O what afar but the fine glooms
On the rare blue hills!

I shall not die, but live forlore —
How bitter it is to part!
O to meet thee, my love, once more!
O my heart, my heart!

No more to hear, no more to see!
O that an echo might wake
And waft one note of thy psalm to me
Ere my heart-strings break!

I should know it how faint soe'er,
And with angel voices blent;
O once to feel thy spirit anear;
I could be content!

Or once between the gates of gold,
While an entering angel trod,
But once — thee sitting to behold
On the hills of God!

SEVEN TIMES SIX. GIVING IN MARRIAGE.

To bear, to nurse, to rear,
To watch, and then to lose:
To see my bright ones disappear,
Drawn up like morning dews —
To bear, to nurse, to rear,
To watch, and then to lose:
This have I done when God drew near
Among his own to choose.

To hear, to heed, to wed,
And with thy lord depart

In tears that he, as soon as shed,
Will let no longer smart. —
To hear, to heed, to wed,
This while thou didst I smiled,
For now it was not God who said,
"Mother, give ME thy child."

O fond, O fool, and blind!
To God I gave with tears;
But when a man like grace would find,
My soul put by her fears —
O fond, O fool, and blind!
God guards in happier spheres;
That man will guard where he did bind
Is hope for unknown years.

To hear, to heed, to wed,
Fair lot that maidens choose,
Thy mother's tenderest words are said,
Thy face no more she views;
Thy mother's lot, my dear,
She doth in nought accuse;
Her lot to bear, to nurse, to rear,
To love — and then to lose.

SEVEN TIMES SEVEN. LONGING FOR HOME.

I.

A song of a boat: —
There was once a boat on a billow:
Lightly she rocked to her port remote,
And the foam was white in her wake like snow,

And her frail mast bowed when the breeze would blow,
And bent like a wand of willow.

II.

I shaded mine eyes one day when a boat
Went curtseying over the billow,
I marked her course till a dancing mote
She faded out on the moonlit foam,
And I stayed behind in the dear loved home;
And my thoughts all day were about the boat
And my dreams upon the pillow.

III.

I pray you hear my song of a boat,
For it is but short: —
My boat, you shall find none fairer afloat,
In river or port.
Long I looked out for the lad she bore,
On the open desolate sea,
And I think he sailed to the heavenly shore,
For he came not back to me —
Ah me!

IV.

A song of a nest: —
There was once a nest in a hollow:
Down in the mosses and knot-grass pressed,
Soft and warm, and full to the brim —
Vetches leaned over it purple and dim,
With buttercup buds to follow.

V.

I pray you hear my song of a nest,
For it is not long: —

You shall never light, in a summer quest
The bushes among —
Shall never light on a prouder sitter,
A fairer nestful, nor ever know
A softer sound than their tender twitter,
That wind-like did come and go.

VI.

I had a nestful once of my own,
Ah, happy, happy I!
Right dearly I loved them: but when they were grown
They spread out their wings to fly —
O, one after one they flew away
Far up to the heavenly blue,
To the better country, the upper day,
And — I wish I was going too.

VII.

I pray you, what is the nest to me,
My empty nest?
And what is the shore where I stood to see
My boat sail down to the west?
Can I call that home where I anchor yet,
Though my good man has sailed?
Can I call that home where my nest was set,
Now all its hope hath failed?
Nay, but the port where my sailor went,
And the land where my nestlings be:
There is the home where my thoughts are sent,
The only home for me —
Ah me!

EDWIN ARNOLD

(1832– .)

AFTER A DEATH IN ARABIA.

HE who died at Azan sends
This to comfort all his friends:

Faithful friends! It lies, I know,
Pale and white and cold as snow;
And ye say, "Abdallah's dead!"
Weeping at the feet and head.
I can see your falling tears,
I can hear your sighs and prayers;
Yet I smile and whisper this,—
"I am not the thing you kiss;
Cease your tears, and let it lie;
It *was* mine, it is not I."

Sweet friends! what the women lave
For its last bed of the grave,
Is a tent which I am quitting,
Is a garment no more fitting,
Is a cage from which, at last,
Like a hawk my soul hath pass'd.
Love the inmate, not the room,—
The wearer, not the garb,—the plume

Of the falcon, not the bars
Which kept him from these splendid stars.

Loving friends! Be wise, and dry
Straightway every weeping eye, —
What ye lift upon the bier
Is not worth a wistful tear.
'Tis an empty sea-shell, — one
Out of which the pearl is gone;
The shell is broken, it lies there;
The pearl, the all, the soul, is here.
'Tis an earthen jar, whose lid
Allah seal'd, the while it hid
That treasure of his treasury,
A mind that lov'd him; let it lie!
Let the shard be earth's once more,
Since the gold shines in his store!

Allah glorious! Allah good!
Now thy world is understood;
Now the long, long wonder ends;
Yet ye weep, my erring friends,
While the man whom ye call dead,
In unspoken bliss, instead,
Lives and loves you; lost, 'tis true,
By such light as shines for you;
But in light ye cannot see
Of unfulfill'd felicity, —
In enlarging paradise,
Lives a life that never dies.

Farewell, friends! Yet not farewell;
Where I am, ye, too, shall dwell.

I am gone before your face,
A moment's time, a little space.
When ye come where I have stepp'd
Ye will wonder why ye wept;
Ye will know, by wise love taught,
That here is all, and there is naught.
Weep awhile, if ye are fain, —
Sunshine still must follow rain;
Only not at death, — for death,
Now I know, is that first breath
Which our souls draw when we enter
Life, which is of all life centre.

Be ye certain all seems love,
View'd from Allah's throne above;
Be ye stout of heart, and come
Bravely onward to your home!
La Allah illa Allah! yea!
Thou love divine! Thou love alway!

He that died at Azan gave
This to those who made his grave.

EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN

(1833– .)

THE HAND OF LINCOLN.

LOOK on this cast, and know the hand
That bore a nation in its hold:
From this mute witness understand
What Lincoln was, — how large of mould.

The man who sped the woodman's team,
And deepest sunk the ploughman's share,
And pushed the laden raft astream,
Of fate before him unaware.

This was the hand that knew to swing
The axe — since thus would Freedom train
Her son — and made the forest ring,
And drove the wedge, and toiled amain.

Firm hand, that loftier office took,
A conscious leader's will obeyed,
And, when men sought his word and look,
With steadfast might the gathering swayed.

No courtier's, toying with a sword,
Nor minstrel's, laid across a lute;
A chief's uplifted to the Lord
When all the kings of earth were mute!

The hand of Anak, sinewed strong,
The fingers that on greatness clutch;
Yet, lo! the marks their lines along
Of one who strove and suffered much.

For here in knotted cord and vein
I trace the varying chart of years;
I know the troubled heart, the strain,
The weight of Atlas — and the tears.

Again I see the patient brow
That palm erewhile was wont to press;
And now 't is furrowed deep, and now
Made smooth with hope and tenderness.

For something of a formless grace
This moulded outline plays about;
A pitying flame, beyond our trace,
Breathes like a spirit, in and out, —

The love that cast an aureole
Round one who, longer to endure,
Called mirth to ease his ceaseless dole,
Yet kept his nobler purpose sure.

Lo, as I gaze, the statured man,
Built up from yon large hand, appears:

A type that Nature wills to plan
But once in all a people's years.

What better than this voiceless cast
To tell of such a one as he,
Since through its living semblance passed
The thought that bade a race be free!

WILLIAM MORRIS

(1834–1896.)

A PICTURE FROM "GOLDEN WINGS."

MIDWAYS of a walled garden,
In the happy poplar land,
Did an ancient castle stand,
With an old knight for a warden.

Many scarlet bricks there were
In its walls, and old gray stone;
Over which red apples shone
At the right time of the year.

On the bricks the green moss grew,
Yellow lichen on the stone,
Over which red apples shone;
Little war that castle knew.

Deep green water fill'd the moat,
Each side had a red brick lip,
Green and mossy with the drip
Of dew and rain; there was a boat

Of carven wood, with hangings green
About the stern: it was great bliss
For lovers to sit there and kiss
In the hot summer noons, not seen.

Across the moat the fresh west wind
In very little ripples went;
The way the heavy aspens bent
Towards it, was a thing to mind.

The painted drawbridge over it
Went up and down with gilded chains;
'Twas pleasant in the summer rains
Within the bridge-house there to sit.

There were five swans that ne'er did eat
The water-weeds, for ladies came
Each day, and young knights did the same,
And gave them cakes and bread for meat.

They had a house of painted wood,
A red roof gold-spiked over it,
Wherein upon their eggs to sit
Week after week: no drop of blood

Drawn from men's bodies by sword-blows,
Came ever there, or any tear;
Most certainly from year to year
'Twas pleasant as a Provence rose.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE

(1837– .)

FROM "ATALANTA IN CALYDON."

WHEN the hounds of spring are on winter's traces,
The mother of months in meadow or plain
Fills the shadows and windy places
With lisp of leaves and ripple of rain;
And the brown bright nightingale amorous
Is half assuaged for Itylus,
For the Thracian ships and the foreign faces,
The tongueless vigil, and all the pain.

Come with bows bent and with emptying of quivers,
Maiden most perfect, lady of light,
With a noise of winds and many rivers,
With a clamor of waters, and with might;
Bind on thy sandals, O thou most fleet,
Over the splendor and speed of thy feet;
For the faint east quickens, the wan west shivers,
Round the feet of the day and the feet of the night.

Where shall we find her, how shall we sing to her,
Fold our hands round her knees, and cling?
O that man's heart were as fire and could spring to her,
Fire, or the strength of the streams that spring!
For the stars and the winds are unto her
As raiment, as songs of the harp-player;
For the risen stars and the fallen cling to her,
And the southwest-wind and the west-wind sing.

For winter's rains and ruins are over,
And all the season of snows and sins;
The days dividing lover and lover,
The light that loses, the night that wins;
And time remember'd is grief forgotten,
And frosts are slain and flowers begotten,
And in green underwood and cover
Blossom by blossom the spring begins.

The full streams feed on flower of rushes,
Ripe grasses trammel a travelling foot,
The faint fresh flame of the young year flushes
From leaf to flower and flower to fruit;
And fruit and leaf are as gold and fire,
And the oat is heard above the lyre,
And the hoofed heel of a satyr crushes
The chestnut-husk at the chestnut-root.

And Pan by noon and Bacchus by night,
Fleeter of foot than the fleet-foot kid,
Follows with dancing and fills with delight
The Mænad and the Bassarid;
And soft as lips that laugh and hide

The laughing leaves of the trees divide,
And screen from seeing and leave in sight
The god pursuing, the maiden hid.

The ivy falls with the Bacchanal's hair
Over her eyebrows, hiding her eyes;
The wild vine slipping down leaves bare
Her bright breast shortening into sighs;
The wild vine slips with the weight of its leaves,
But the berried ivy catches and cleaves
To the limbs that glitter, the feet that scare
The wolf that follows, the fawn that flies.

IN MEMORY OF WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR

BACK to the flower-town, side by side,
The bright months bring,
New-born, the bridegroom and the bride,
Freedom and spring.

The sweet land laughs from sea to sea,
Fill'd full of sun;
All things come back to her, being free;
All things but one.

In many a tender wheaten plot
Flowers that were dead

Live, and old suns revive; but not
That holier head.

By this white wandering waste of sea,
Far north, I hear
One face shall never turn to me
As once this year:

Shall never smile and turn and rest
On mine as there,
Nor one most sacred hand be prest
Upon my hair.

I came as one whose thoughts half linger,
Half run before;
The youngest to the oldest singer
That England bore.

I found him whom I shall not find
Till all grief end,
In holiest age our mightiest mind,
Father and friend.

But thou, if anything endure,
If hope there be,
O spirit that man's life left pure,
Man's death set free,

Not with disdain of days that were
Look earthward now;
Let dreams revive the reverend hair,
The imperial brow;

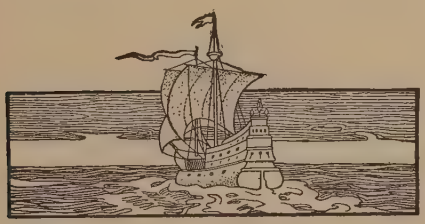
Come back in sleep, for in the life
Where thou art not

We find none like thee. Time and strife
And the world's lot

Move thee no more; but love at least
And reverent heart
May move thee, royal and releast,
Soul, as thou art.

And thou, his Florence, to thy trust
Receive and keep,
Keep safe his dedicated dust,
His sacred sleep.

So shall thy lovers, come from far,
Mix with thy name
As morning-star with evening-star
His faultless fame.



A FORSAKEN GARDEN.

IN a coign of the cliff between lowland and highland,
At the sea-down's edge between windward and lee,
Walled round with rocks as an inland island,

The ghost of a garden fronts the sea.
A girdle of brushwood and thorn encloses
The steep square slope of the blossomless bed
Where the weeds that grew green from the graves of its roses
Now lie dead.

The fields fall southward, abrupt and broken,
To the low last edge of the long lone land.
If a step should sound or a word be spoken,
Would a ghost not rise at the strange guest's hand?
So long have the gray bare walls lain guestless,
Through branches and briers if a man make way,
He shall find no life but the sea-wind's restless
Night and day.

The dense hard passage is blind and stifled
That crawls by a track none turn to climb
To the strait waste place that the years have rifled
Of all but the thorns that are touched not of time.
The thorns he spares when the rose is taken;
The rocks are left when he wastes the plain.
The wind that wanders, the weeds wind-shaken
These remain.

Not a flower to be prest of the foot that falls not;
As the heart of a dead man the seed-plots are dry;
From the thicket of thorns whence the nightingale calls not.
Could she call, there were never a rose to reply.
Over the meadows that blossom and wither
Rings out the note of a sea-bird's song

Only the sun and the rain come hither
All year long.

The sun burns sere and the rain dishevels
One gaunt bleak blossom of scentless breath.
Only the wind here hovers and revels
In a round where life seems barren as death.
Here there was laughing of old, there was weeping,
Haply, of lovers none ever will know,
Whose eyes went seaward a hundred sleeping
Years ago.

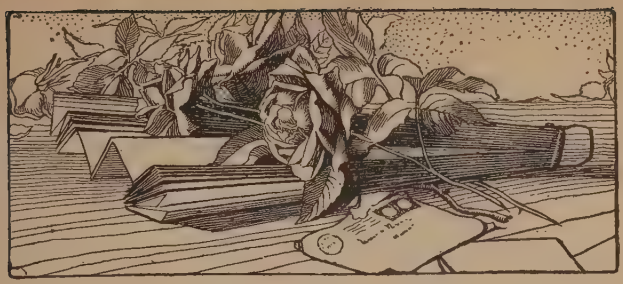
Heart handfast in heart as they stood, "Look thither,"
Did he whisper? "Look forth from the flowers to the sea;
For the foam-flowers endure when the rose-blossoms wither,
And men that love lightly may die — but we?"
And the same wind sang and the same waves whitened,
And or ever the garden's last petals were shed,
In the lips that had whispered, the eyes that had lightened,
Love was dead.

Or they loved their life through, and then went whither?
And were one to the end — but what end who knows?
Love deep as the sea as a rose must wither,
As the rose-red seaweed that mocks the rose.
Shall the dead take thought for the dead to love them?
What love was ever as deep as a grave?
They are loveless now as the grass above them
Or the wave.

All are at one now, roses and lovers,
Not known of the cliffs and the fields and the sea.
Not a breath of the time that has been hovers
In the air now soft with a summer to be.
Not a breath shall there sweeten the seasons hereafter
Of the flowers or the lovers that laugh now or weep,
When, as they that are free now of weeping and laughter,
We shall sleep.

Here death may deal not again forever;
Here change may come not till all change end.
From the graves they have made they shall rise up never,
Who have left nought living to ravage and rend.
Earth, stones, and thorns of the wild ground growing,
While the sun and the rain live, these shall be;
Till a last wind's breath upon all these blowing
Roll the sea.

Till the slow sea rise and the sheer cliff crumble,
Till terrace and meadow the deep gulfs drink,
Till the strength of the waves of the high tides humble
The fields that lessen, the rocks that shrink,
Here now in his triumph where all things falter,
Stretch'd out on the spoils that his own hand spread,
As a god self-slain on his own strange altar,
Death lies dead.



AUSTIN DOBSON

(1840– .)

A DEAD LETTER.

I.

I DREW it from its china tomb;—
It came out feebly scented
With some thin ghost of past perfume
That dust and days had lent it.

An old, old letter,—folded still!
To read with due composure,
I sought the sun-lit window-sill,
Above the gray enclosure,

That glimmering in the sultry haze,
Faint flowered, dimly shaded,
Slumbered like Goldsmith's Madam Blaize,
Bedizened and brocaded.

A queer old place! You'd surely say
Some tea-board garden-maker

Had planned it in Dutch William's day
To please some florist Quaker,

So trim it was. The yew-trees still,
With pious care perverted,
Grew in the same grim shapes; and still
The lipless dolphin spurted;

Still in his wonted state abode
The broken-nosed Apollo;
And still the cypress-arbor showed
The same umbrageous hollow.

Only, — as fresh young Beauty gleams
From coffee-colored laces, —
So peeped from its old-fashioned dreams
The fresher modern traces;

For idle mallet, hoop, and ball
Upon the lawn were lying;
A magazine, a tumbled shawl,
Round which the swifts were flying;

And, tossed beside the Guelder rose,
A heap of rainbow knitting,
Where, blinking in her pleased repose,
A Persian cat was sitting.

"A place to love in, — live, — for aye,
If we too, like Tithonus,
Could find some God to stretch the gray
Scant life the Fates have thrown us;

But now by stream we run our race,
With buttoned heart and pocket;
Our Love's a gilded, surplus grace, —
Just like an empty locket!

'The time is out of joint.' Who will,
May strive to make it better;
For me, this warm old window-sill,
And this old dusty letter."

II.

"Dear *John* (the letter ran), it can't can't be,
For Father's gone to *Chorley Fair* with *Sam*,
And Mother's storing Apples, — *Prue* and *Me*
Up to our Elbows making Damson Jam:
But we shall meet before a Week is gone, —
'Tis a long Lane that has no turning,' *John!*

Only till Sunday next, and then you'll wait
Behind the White-Thorn, by the broken Stile —
We can go round and catch them at the Gate,
All to Ourselves, for nearly one long Mile;
Dear *Prue* won't look, and Father he'll go on,
And *Sam's* two Eyes are all for *Cissy, John!*

John, she's so smart, — with every ribbon new,
Flame-colored Sack, and Crimson Padesoy;
As proud as proud; and has the Vapours too,
Just like My Lady; — calls poor *Sam* a Boy,
And vows no Sweet-heart's worth the Thinking-on
Till he's past Thirty . . . I know better, *John!*

My Dear, I don't think that I thought of much
Before we knew each other, I and you;
And now, why, *John*, your least, least Finger-touch,
Gives me enough to think a Summer through.
See, for I send you Something! There, 'tis gone!
Look in this corner, — mind you find it, *John!*"

III.

This was the matter of the note, —
A long-forgot deposit,
Dropped in an Indian dragon's throat,
Deep in a fragrant closet,

Piled with a dapper Dresden world, —
Beaux, beauties, prayers, and poses, —
Bonzes with squat legs undercurled,
And great jars filled with roses.

Ah, heart that wrote! Ah, lips that kissed!
You had no thought or presage
Into what keeping you dismissed
Your simple old-world message!

A reverent one. Though we to-day
Distrust beliefs and powers,
The artless, ageless things you say
Are fresh as May's own flowers.

Starring some pure primeval spring,
Ere Gold had grown despotic, —
Ere Life was yet a selfish thing,
Or love a mere exotic!

I need not search too much to find
Whose lot it was to send it,
That feel upon me yet the kind,
Soft hand of her who penned it;

And see, through two-score years of smoke,
In by-gone, quaint apparel,
Shine from yon time-black Norway oak
The face of Patience Caryl, —

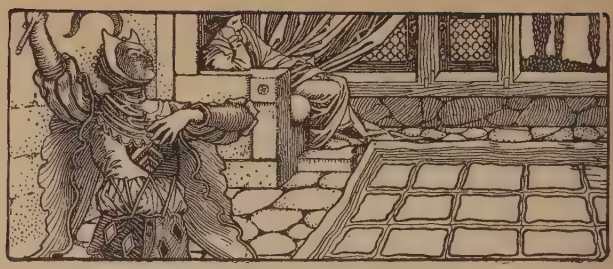
The pale, smooth forehead, silver-tressed;
The gray gown, primly flowered;
The spotless, stately coif whose crest
Like Hector's horse-plume towered;

And still the sweet half-solemn look
Where some past thought was clinging,
As when one shuts a serious book
To hear the thrushes singing.

I kneel to you! Of those you were,
Whose kind old hearts grow mellow, —
Whose fair old faces grow more fair
As Point and Flanders yellow;

Whom some old store of garnered grief,
Their placid temples shading,
Crowns like a wreath of autumn leaf
With tender tints of fading.

Peace to your soul! You died unwed —
Despite this loving letter.
And what of John? The less that's said
Of John, I think, the better.



EDWARD ROWLAND SILL

(1841—1887.)

THE FOOL'S PRAYER.

THE royal feast was done; the King
Sought some new sport to banish care,
And to his jester cried: "Sir fool,
Kneel now, and make for us a prayer!"

The jester doffed his cap and bells,
And stood the mocking court before;
They could not see the bitter smile
Behind the painted grin he wore.

He bowed his head, and bent his knee
Upon the monarch's silken stool;
His pleading voice arose: "Oh Lord,
Be merciful to me, a fool!

No pity, Lord, could change the heart
From red with wrong to white as wool:
The rod must heal the sin; but, Lord,
Be merciful to me, a fool!

'Tis not by guilt the onward sweep
Of truth and right, O Lord, we stay;
'Tis by our follies that so long
We hold the earth from heaven away.

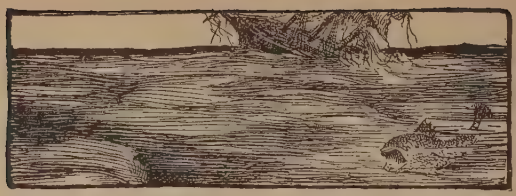
These clumsy feet, still in the mire,
Go crushing blossoms without end;
These hard, well-meaning hands we thrust
Among the heart-strings of a friend.

The ill-timed truth we might have kept —
Who knows how sharp it pierced and stung!
The word we had not sense to say —
Who knows how grandly it had rung!

Our faults no tenderness should ask,
The chastening stripes must cleanse them all;
But for our blunders — oh, in shame
Before the eyes of heaven we fall.

Earth bears no balsam for mistakes;
Men crown the knave, and scourge the tool
That did his will; but Thou, O Lord,
Be merciful to me, a fool!"

The room was hushed; in silence rose
The King, and sought his gardens cool,
And walked apart, and murmured low,
"Be merciful to me, a fool!"



JAMES JEFFREY ROCHE

(1847– .)

THE KEARSARGE.

IN the gloomy ocean bed
Dwelt a formless thing, and said,
In the dim and countless eons long ago,
"I will build a stronghold high,
Ocean's power to defy,
And the pride of haughty man to lay low."

Crept the minutes for the sad,
Sped the cycles for the glad,
But the march of time was neither less nor more;
While the formless atom died,
Myriad millions by its side,
And above them slowly lifted Roncador.

Roncador of Caribee,
Coral dragon of the sea,
Ever sleeping with his teeth below the wave;
Woe to him who breaks the sleep!
Woe to them who sail the deep!
Woe to ship and man that fear a shipman's grave!

Hither many a galleon old,
Heavy-keeled with guilty gold,
Fled before the hardy rover smiting sore;
But the sleeper silent lay
Till the preyer and his prey
Brought their plunder and their bones to Roncador.

Be content, O conqueror!
Now our bravest ship of war,
War and tempest who had often braved before,
All her storied prowess past,
Strikes her glorious flag at last
To the formless thing that builded Roncador

RUDYARD KIPLING

(1865– .)

RECESSIONAL.

GOD of our fathers, known of old,
Lord of our far-flung battle line,
Beneath whose awful hand we hold
Dominion over palm and pine.
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget — lest we forget!

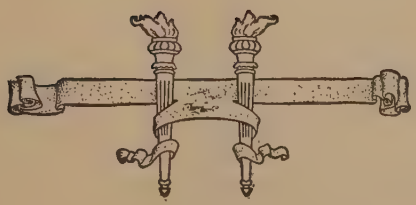
The tumult and the shouting dies,
The captains and the kings depart,
Still stands thine ancient sacrifice,
An humble and a contrite heart.
Lord God of Hosts be with us yet,
Lest we forget — lest we forget!

Far called our navies melt away,
On dune and headland sinks the fire,
Lo, all our pomp of yesterday
Is one with Nineveh and Tyre!
Judge of the nations, spare us yet,
Lest we forget — lest we forget!

If, drunk with sight of power, we loose
  Wild tongues that have not thee in awe,
Such boastings as the Gentiles use,
  Or lesser breeds without the law —
Lord God of Hosts be with us yet,
Lest we forget — lest we forget!

For heathen heart that puts her trust
  In reeking tube and iron shard,
All valiant dust that builds on dust,
  And guarding calls not thee to guard.
For frantic boast and foolish word,
Thy mercy on thy People, Lord!

AMEN.



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